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THE

MISCELLANEOUS

WORKS AND NOVELS

OF

R. C. DALLAS, ESQ.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. II.

CONTAINING

THE FIRST VOLUME OF PERCIVAL.

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T. DAVISON, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.

PERCIVAL;

OR,

NATURE VINDICATED.

A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore let him seasonably water the one, and destroy the other.

BACON.

VOL. I.

ORIGINAL DEDICATION OF PERCIVAL.

TO HER
At whose desire
I undertook to write the following pages,
Whose affection and smiles
Animated me while I was writing them,
Whose maternal virtues
Have raised around me a family
Of young friends,
And whose cheerfulness and accomplishments
Have rendered years of adversity
Not only tolerable but, in a great degree, happy,
THESE VOLUMES,
Which attempt to give
A just and exalted idea of Marriage,
To justify the Rules of Society,
And to elevate Human Nature,
Are
Most cordially inscribed.

PREFACE.

TO amuse or instruct the world, that is, a certain number of those who read, is an ambition rather pardonable than likely to be pardoned; for there is a presumption in it repugnant to self-love. In no system is the levelling principle more prevalent than in that of the understanding: in the republic of intellect, the slightest pretension to step out of the crowd awakens universal jealousy, and the title of the pretender is rigidly examined. In assuming the pen, therefore, it is but natural for me to wish to conciliate my Readers, and to leave their judgment free to decide solely upon the merits of the volumes now before them, without taking into consideration the novelty of the pretension to the public ear.

It would be easy for me to say, and to say with truth, that the ambition I have to please is founded on motives very different from that of vanity; yet I should not deserve to be believed were I to assert that praise was indifferent to me. But be assured, Reader, that in presenting myself to you with a desire to amuse or to instruct, my chief gratification will consist in the good that may arise to you or myself, more than in the praises you may be pleased to bestow on my endeavours; that I advance no pretensions to superiority; and that I wish you to forget the Author in contemplating the characters and

sentiments laid before you, as the ingenious student of Salamanca contemplated the soul of the licentiate Don Pedro.

They who, allured by the title of Novel, take up this book with an avidity for an uninterrupted chain of incidents, will be disappointed. To improve the heart, as well as to please the fancy, and to be the auxiliary of the divine and of the moralist, are the best praises of the best novel writers; and if I may aspire to any praise, it is that of keeping those examples in view.

Revolutions in morals lead to revolutions in states. All the strained arguments and pedantic language of the levelling system are a million times less likely to do mischief, than the pernicious art of mixing virtue and vice with that elegance of diction and refinement of wit that leave them undistinguishable, or so colour them, that warm and youthful imaginations adopt the one for the other.

Wit is in morals what liberty is in politics, and wine in diet: well-used, it strengthens the mind, exhilarates, and elevates; ill-used, it enfeebles, inebriates, and destroys. Like opium to a vitiated constitution, it seduces the imagination, lulls reason, and undermines virtue: its mischief is unbounded, and spreads like a pestilence, descending from generation to generation, infusing corruption into the moral system, and endangering the best political one.

Is there any reader that can mistake this censure, and suppose it dictated by an enemy to wit? I will presume to say that it comes from the pen of one of its greatest admirers. There can be nothing more delightful to the mind than wit in alliance with virtue. Such was the wit of Addison, of Johnson, of Burke; such is the wit of all who are both good and great. But divide goodness and greatness, and I confess myself the foe of wit; I should have plea-

sure in seeing it treated, as it deserves, with abhorrence, and every claim to talent accompanied with depravity, rejected with scorn. How much principle and manners have suffered by it at various periods is obvious, and it behoves us not more to unite against the madness of invading civil order, than against the infatuation by which men are tickled into vice, and by which consequently the bonds of society are loosened.

If the following pages fortify the mind of any female against the attacks of seduction; if they make the seducer look with horror into his bosom; if they excite manly and domestic virtues; and if they teach men not to be ashamed of either speaking or acting morally, they will fulfil the chief design of the author, and yield him a gratification even superior to that he has already received, in the approbation of friendship. If their execution be at all in proportion to their design, they have a just claim to the protection of every chaste woman, every honourable lover, every moral and religious man.

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PERCIVAL.

LETTER I.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

Sentiment no sin—Edward Percival.

My dear Lord,

YOUR acquaintance with Mr. Percival is too short: you can form no judgment of him. First impressions are liable to be erroneous; and though I allow you all the skill your experience and study deserve, I must assure you that what you think like art in the character of my friend, is either pure nature or nature's faithful substitute, honest habit. The open countenance of his fine face is not the effect of artifice; nor are the sentiments he utters the snares of an insidious heart. He feels what he looks, and means what he says. My Lord, you are infected with the mania of the times. It is an absurdity, it is a wickedness that has crept in amongst us, in the conclusion of the eighteenth century, that renders the expressions of sentiment and morality at once suspected and ridiculous. It was never pretended,

from the beginning of the world, that words or looks were the criterions of virtue; but it has been reserved for these days to proscribe the effusions and emanations of the soul, and to discover villany in the heart, if the tongue venture on the praise of rectitude. It would be just as wise, in my opinion, to make the sleek coat and slender limbs of a courser the tokens of sluggishness and inactivity, though they bespeak the reverse.

Sentiment, whether it be uttered by words or insinuated by the countenance, should spring from the heart, its natural source: and is this source to be stopped, because it is possible to counterfeit what it produces? Are we to discard sincerity, because it is difficult to distinguish it from mere profession? A man of education will not profess largely; but surely, my Lord, to applaud virtue in the abstract may not only be consistent with sincerity, but to hear its praise must be very grateful to minds untainted with the fashionable prejudice. For my part, I declare, that even were I not acquainted with Edward Percival, his sentiments would be passports, and his countenance a key, to my heart. But I have the happiness of having known him from a boy, and have long enjoyed his confidence and his friendship. He is one of those men who do honour to nature, and are born to retrieve the character of our species. I will make him and his family the subject of some of my letters to your Lordship. During this delightful season of the year I usually pass a considerable portion of my time at his beautiful seat, whither I am now going, and where I shall hope the enjoyment of your correspondence.

LETTER II.

LORD DIGBY TO PHILIP TOWERS.

Virtue not to be too much praised—Charles Percival—Wisdom of youth—Dogmatism—Lord Chopstone.

London.

WERE Virtue endued with a visible form, said the sage, all men would be enamoured of her; yet I think, Towers, that were she to be thrusting herself perpetually forward without waiting to be drawn forth, and ever trumpeting herself, disgust would be apt to blend itself with our admiration. I am willing to take your friend's praises from *you;* and you have interested me exceedingly in his character; but when he did me the favour of passing a day with me, he delivered so many fine sentiments and aphorisms, that, I own, I began to be suspicious of a morality that was so marked in its display. When we go to dinner, my friend, we do not mean to go to church; and I am apt to doubt that he who assumes the divine at table has in his heart but little of the divinity that should grace the pulpit. Be that as it may, till I know more of your friend I will not be so unjust as to suffer my prepossessions to outweigh your better information. Mr. Percival's heart and life you say are good; I am sure his sentiments are so, and therefore between us we will love him.

With his brother Charles I am more acquainted. There is an honest, open, and liberal, though, I confess, careless and dissipated, turn of disposition in that young man that wins upon the heart, and banishes all reserve and suspicion. I never heard him profess benevolence, yet while there is a guinea in his purse, I know it is never shut to distress. It

is true he is charged with extravagance, and indeed I fear his spirit is beyond his fortune. What a pity it is that such a noble fellow should be "cabined, "cribbed, confined!" A few years' retrenchment, however, may repair the breach made by the effervescence of his youth; and, let me tell you, my dear Philip, in spite of your admiration of the young philosopher, I mean his brother Edward, that five and twenty is not, nay ought not to be the age of profound reasoning, exact calculation, or nice economy. Provided the rules of honour be held sacred, it is surely natural and agreeable to see youth bustling on the wings of the passions, and learning gradually and experimentally how to command them, rather than to find them settling at once into all the refinements of wisdom by the force of their nurses' fairy tales, or tutors' syllogisms.

The dogmatic test of ratiocination, if too much trusted to, is frequently inconclusive: while fancy, taste, and impulse, often set us right we know not why. The formality of the young Lord Chopstone, who reduces all conversation to propositions, to majors, minors, and conclusions, and buckles down the imagination to a definition, is to me so intolerable, that I would rather take a dose of physic and keep my room all day, than be bound to embrace conviction through his despotic logic. The consequence of confiding solely to the conformation of his brain is, that after throwing off Christianity, he is improving into atheism; and from his eagerness in Gallic politics, I expect, in time, to find him a confirmed democrat. That reason should in general be the arbiter of our actions, I trust you know me too well, Philip, to suspect I should ever oppose the doctrine: but in religion, in politics, in taste, there are opinions, enjoyments, and propensities, if not inconsistent with reason, yet

wholly out of her province, and where her appearance is perfectly impertinent. Why should the ardour of devotion be disturbed by a hint that the Deity is unmoved and immoveable, when that ardour improves while it consoles the heart of man? Why should we be told, as an argument for equality, that all men come from and return to the same dust, when no experiment can equalize their lots? In short, my friend, we have nearly as much grounds for refusing a standard to reason as to taste, and we have always found the most sensible men the readiest to submit, when the brain is manifestly inadequate to its theme. And then, what an infinite gradation of intellect! and how very differently does the same man reason on the same subjects in youth, manhood, and age, those successive empires of impulse, doubt, and habit! or perhaps of vanity, arrogance, and imbecility! I take Charles Percival to be under the first of the regular empires, impulse; and Lord Chopstone to be blending the two first of the irregular ones, vanity and arrogance: and yet there is not much difference in their ages. The reason is, that the climates of their empires are different: the former proceeds gradually, as fruit matures in the latitudes of forty and fifty; the latter runs spring into summer, and summer into an arid and destructive autumn, as under the line.

I have fallen into these reflections from your letters bringing into my mind the two Percivals and Chopstone; sentiment, impulse, and dogmatism. These three young men are good subjects for the eye of a settled philosopher. Let us keep them in view, Towers; let us watch their progress, and mark their tendencies. You and I have fixed our stations on a sheltered rock, whence we may look around upon the variety of mankind, amuse ourselves with their vagaries, and feast our hearts with

occasions that are ever presenting themselves of turning tears into smiles, or smiling with the happy. Write to me soon, make me more acquainted with your Percivals. Look round the country for some heart-food; chuse, as you well know how, the right sort, and indulge with the purchase

Your affectionate

DIGBY.

LETTER III.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

Virtue cannot be too much praised—Characters sentimental, desultory, and dogmatic—A singular commencement of friendship—A pleasant lodge—A daughter educated by her parents—A brown-eyed beauty.

Elms.

AGAIN, my dear Lord, must I say, that there is not a more pernicious error than that of making youth afraid to speak in favour of virtue. Teach them to damn morality in jest, and they will soon be immoral in earnest: let them ridicule sentiment, and their conduct will not long be a fit subject of praise.

I think, my Lord, no beauty could be borne to extol her own charms, except Virtue herself, but that were she visible, the truth and motive of the applause would render it agreeable even from her own lips. But see how you have sounded the trumpet for my friend, whom you have suspected to be praising himself, when he was praising only what he loved! It is true his sentiments and his aphorisms, as you call them, make a part of himself, but they may make a part of any body else; and it is no vanity to extol the possessions we have in common.

Though your Lordship doubts the divine at table has little of the divinity that should grace the pulpit, I am confident that he who should leave all his divinity and morality in the pulpit, would not be welcome at your table.

Before I keep my promise of writing to you of the inhabitants of this mansion, I will make some remarks on the two other characters mentioned in your Lordship's letter. I am happy to agree with you that there is a warmth and a liberality about Charles Percival that bespeak a noble heart: but his dispositions are at present desultory. It is evident that he has sprung from the same stock as Edward. Philanthropy, ardour, disinterestedness, mark their generic qualities; reflection, self-rigour, though not always self-command on the one side, precipitancy, indulgence, and impulse, on the other, fix their specific difference.

Charles speaks whatever comes uppermost, whether it be his own thoughts or the thoughts of another; and he makes hasty promises, which are never intentionally, but often necessarily, broken. The volatility of his nature, and the bias taken from his companions, lead to the most dangerous consequences; and he is not far from the point where begins the influence of the vortex which they have already entered, and against which it is now in vain for them to beat. Mark it, my Lord, his philanthropy is becoming indiscriminate prodigality, his ardour the fire of the grape, and his disinterestedness habitual incaution. I say *is becoming*, for the transition is gradual. But the most painful anticipation I have respecting Charles is, that the exterior contempt for moralizing will corrode inwardly; that his heart will suffer for his tongue, and his principles yield to the influence of habit.

Lord Chopstone had early before him the conduct

of an imperious parent. Blood and example combined to make him a tyrant, when a ludicrous destiny at his father's death gave him a tutor, whose philosophy consisted of irreligion, and whose eloquence was the art of wrangling. With this man he went on his travels at a time when the novel doctrines of nature and equality were broached. These are the foundations of this young man's character. Hot and arbitrary, yet pretending to refer every thing to the test of cool reasoning: catching at every word for an argument, and ready to maintain either side of a question rather than lose a debate; supporting his positions by loudness of voice, and forcing his opinion down your throat in spite of your teeth; ever pleading for freedom, yet constantly manifesting a despotic spirit. He has so disgusted his old uncle, the Earl of Powic, whose heir he is, that, added to the Earl's own singularities, he never, or very rarely, sees him, though their seats are situated within a few miles of each other. Dissimilar as Charles is to Edward, Lord Chopstone is still more so; and your Lordship must grant that there is no affinity between his bow-wow logic and the elegant and polite reasoning of Edward Percival.

Edward speaks his own thoughts; and whatever he promises is sure to be fulfilled: the former is the result of his reflecting deeply; the latter of his tracing events through their appropriate means. He is by nature ardent, endued with extreme sensibility, and an irritability that engages the whole force of his reason to contend with. It has been, and still is, the study of his life to regulate his emotions; but on occasions I have seen them lead him into a warmth, for the excess of which he has afterwards blushed and humbled himself. He often paints himself as a man equally conscious of the dignity and infirmity of our race, from his own feelings; and declares that

his best merit consists in forming resolutions to be among the supporters of the former, rather than in the satisfactory consciousness of being really so. What, however, he calls his failings I should in general sooner class among perfections, as they are in fact the result, or rather concomitants, of active virtue. He is the avowed patron of sentiment. Whoever expresses it in his company is sure to meet his attention and receive his approbation; and it is his fixed opinion, that the loose morals and licentious conduct of the age are chiefly owing to the having banished from polite society the professions in favour of virtue, which used to give a grace to conversation; that, in order to guard against half a dozen hypocrites, we have consented to sacrifice a thousand noble spirits; and that till this abuse be reformed, the deep excesses of the tavern, the horrors of the gaming-house, and the corruptions of promiscuous gallantry, will triumph over rational conviviality, cordial intercourse, and conjugal endearments.

Persuaded of the justness of this opinion, he perhaps moralizes more in conversation than he would otherwise do, and endeavours to draw others into his plan. He has early decided on the value of life, and formed a reasonable scheme for as much happiness as mortality can afford. On the death of his father he inherited a very large fortune; and as a considerable part of it consisted of money in the funds, on which his brother's and sister's portions were charged, he received his landed estates perfectly unincumbered. Before he was of age he felt an affection for Julia Bevil, my god-daughter, and the only child of my worthy friend Rowland Bevil. It is one of the most grateful reflections of my mind that I was instrumental to their union. I love to recall the circumstances, and glow at the delightful, strong, and faithful images my memory retains. I

will retrace them for you, my dear Lord, for I know I shall give you pleasure.

Bevil-lodge is near Stratford, and very pleasantly situated on the banks of the Avon; a scene that to the imagination will ever be delightful, from its proximity to the natal spot of *Fancy's Child*. My friend's fortune is not large, but equal to the comforts, and some of the elegancies of life. He was always of a contemplative turn, fond of leisure, and delighted with rural scenery, the improvement of which about his house has been his chief occupation, so that he rendered the lodge an absolute paradise without, while Mrs. Bevil and Julia took care that the interior was not only provided with all the requisites of utility, but decorated with that elegant simplicity which is the genuine offspring of real taste.

At the birth of Julia, Mrs. Bevil's life had been despaired of; however, through great skill and care she recovered, but never had another child; and the whole stream of parental affection concentered from both father and mother in the sole pledge of their love. They undertook themselves the formation of her mind; and never were parents better qualified to superintend the education of a child. With all the fondness that springs from the heart, they possessed judgment to discriminate the real good of their object, and resolution to make tenderness subservient to judgment.

Bevil is several years older than I am; but years have little to do with that affection whose chief source is esteem. His worth and amiable manners soon gained my heart; and he first took a liking to me from some congenial sentiments and images he found in one of my publications. The commencement of our acquaintance was singular and curious. The year in which he married I published my treatise in support of the reciprocity of love in marri-

age against the book which your Lordship remembers had appeared in this kingdom, in favour of the eastern despotic doctrine of a plurality of wives. I was one morning revising my treatise for a second edition, when I was told that a stranger wished to see me. The person admitted was Mr. Bevil.— "Sir," said he, "though ceremony has my suffer- "age, as it tends to restrain unnecessary or im- "pertinent intrusion, I have ever thought it a paltry "barrier in keeping congenial spirits apart. I am "not sufficiently acquainted with you to know "whether I pay you or myself the higher compli- "ment in saying that the congeniality I now feel "with the sentiments with which you have lately "favoured the public has impelled me to overleap "the barrier, in the hope of giving my hand to the "man whose heart has made its way to mine."— You know, my Lord, that I have ever had a great propensity to extraordinary adventures, and have a predilection for odd people. Bevil's countenance and his speech were in unison; and though I admit the inconvenience that would arise from a general breach of ceremony by every impulse of imaginary congeniality, yet I yielded to a first impression, which I felt and readily acknowledged. Besides, I was at an age of prompt impressions; not four and twenty, just started in my literary career, and youthfully alive to moral praise. I returned his salute with an assurance that I felt myself honoured. "Whatever else you may be," cried he, "at least "you are an advocate for one of the most sacred and "delightful ties of humanity. I glowed in reading "your arguments in favour of genuine love: I read "them with a sympathy that swelled my heart to "rapture, and I have the joy of being a testimony "to their truth. I love you for it; but I come not "to ask your friendship, or to offer mine. Friend-

" ship is a plant of slow growth, nor does it well " endure a tumultuous climate. A first visit, there- " fore, singularly, though not whimsically made, " and the turbulent scene of the metropolis, afford " no proper occasion; but I come to tell you that my " name is Bevil; that I have a comfortable, though " not extraordinary, fortune, and a very pleasant " lodge on the banks of the Avon, in Warwickshire, " for which I set off to-morrow, with a lovely woman " to whom I have given my heart and my hand, and " whither I invite you to make a summer-excur- " sion, if, when you have turned this adventure over " in your mind, you shall deem it worthy of a sequel." In truth, my Lord, I felt much flattered, and my vanity was so gratified, that I had no doubt of my visitor being one of the most sensible, as well as one of the most amiable personages in the kingdom, which actually proved to be the case; and at the conclusion of some other conversation that ensued, I gave him a very sincere promise of repairing to Bevil-lodge before its beauties should be diminished by the departure of the sun.

I kept my word, and spent a fortnight with this happy couple in the autumn; during which, from the candour and ingenuousness of his disposition, I became as fully acquainted with the character and heart of my new friend as ever after. I then learned that he had early imbibed prejudices against the sex, and was turned of thirty before they were dissipated by the charms of Mrs. Bevil, who had secretly been long attached to him, aided, they both declared, by the picture I had drawn of matrimony: so that in fact, I owed his visit to the share I had had in his conversion.

Soon after their girl was born, I was returning from a jaunt I had made to the lakes of Westmorland, and being pressed to her christening, I again be-

came an inmate of Bevil-lodge, where I was easily detained some time, during which I promised for the little Julia that she should renounce the devil and all his works.

My friend's philosophic turn of mind, his general learning untinctured with pedantry, and his amiable manners, were perfectly calculated for the culture of that friendship which, at our first interview, he justly observed, was not to be suddenly demanded, and could not be abruptly acquired. This plant of slow growth, however, found a congenial soil in our minds, and was not very long in ripening to that perfect attachment which has ever since united us. The days I passed at his paradise furnished me with some of the most delightful treasures of my memory. There I stored my mind with many images, and often indulged in the youthful ardour of composition, anticipating fame in the praises of Bevil; there I philosophized, read, and recited, with a kindred group gathered round me; and there I often supplied a father's place to my little god-daughter, and while he was training the young dryads and hamadryads, I was delightfully occupied in rearing my little nymph to the perfection of her nature.

My happiness in this friendship did not make me forget or neglect other ties; among which, that I enjoyed with the family of Percival was one of the most pleasing to my heart. My father had been vicar of their parish, and from my infancy I had participated their regards. The late Mr. Percival, a very worthy man, had passed much of the younger part of his life in the gratification of a passion for collecting antiquities and original pictures, and when he married was rather advanced in years. And here, my Lord, I cannot but take occasion to observe the impolicy of the heart in late marriages. No sooner are the ties of nature beginning to as-

sume the form of that consummate and heaven-sprung friendship which ought to reign between parents and children, than another law of nature calls age away before the new enjoyment has well been felt. This was Mr. Percival's case. After he married, he settled at the Elms for the remainder of his life, which was passed in improving the country, his estates, and the happiness of the peasantry.

At the time my acquaintance with Bevil commenced, Edward Percival was about four years old, and, under the inspection of his mother, was a fine forward boy. Charles was about eighteen months younger; Caroline was not born. Shortly after, their father having decided upon a private education, a tutor was received into the family, under whose care the boys made a fair progress in literature, and had the seeds of virtue sown in their minds. Nor was there any considerable dissimilarity apparent in their dispositions, till a few years previous to the death of their father, when Edward went with his tutor to Oxford, and Charles prevailed upon Mr. Percival to send him to study at the same school with the son of a neighbouring gentleman, with whom he had formed a friendship.

I had seen these lads with great pleasure advancing under the guidance of the amiable Mr. Stockton, and had occasionally consulted with him on the bias of their minds, the strength of their faculties, and the nature of their studies. Edward was always peculiarly attached to me, and whenever I was a visitor at the Elms sought opportunities of being with me. He was so devoted to the improvement of his understanding, and so willingly chained himself to the acquisition of knowledge, that his heart seemed well guarded; and Mr. Stockton's plan of hard-riding round the country for health, turning the overflowings of animal existence into their proper chan-

nels, and always superadding personal fatigue, preserved his frame from the attacks of early vice, so that he was at eighteen as vigorous in constitution, as he was rich in intellect. He had attained his twentieth year when he lost his father, and as the habitual attachment of his mother rendered it a very severe blow to her heart, he repaired to the Elms to be her solace. It proved, however, a fruitless one. At an advanced age wounds heal not easily; and though they are not generally accompanied with the agonies that attend on youthful blood, a supply for the customary circulation fails, the separated part becomes morbid, and vitality yields to the stroke. Mrs. Percival survived her husband but a few months.

The grief of both Edward and his brother was deep and amiable, but it lasted longer with the former. Charles had acquired a taste for pleasure, and thirty thousand pounds, with an estate of eighteen hundred a-year, which was his portion, in near prospect, was a consolation of a very seducing nature. Caroline's loss was greater; Mrs. Percival had been, indeed, a mother to her. It was the will both of her father and mother that she should reside with her aunt, her father's sister, till her brother was of age. Being named a guardian and trustee in their father's will, I lived, for the remainder of Edward's minority, chiefly at the Elms, through the affection I bore to the family; and it was at that period I began to put in execution a project, which had, some years before, been frequently the feast of my solitary reveries.

Julia Bevil had grown as it were under my hands. Nature had sent her into the world without a drawback upon any of the faculties, and in return, her parents had determined to pay every compliment for the gift, by attending, after they received her, to

the dictates of nature. It had been early agreed that as the pedantry of learning was disagreeable in men, it was insufferable in women, and that Julia should make a very slight progress in literary criticism; but that to make amends, a great degree of real knowledge should be imparted to her, and particularly that she should be rendered mistress of all those accomplishments which heighten domestic felicity, and elevate the characters of the wife, the mother, and the neighbour. She was played into her attainments, hardly ever heard of study, and knew nothing of a task; for, in fact, the faculty of imitation supersedes, in a great measure, the necessity of them to girls. In whatever she undertook she was directed, it is true; but either her father, her mother, myself, or some one else, performed it before her, and repeatedly: the impression made, the acquisition proved no task. Her very duties were chiefly the effect of imitation; she was not harassed with grave discourses, nor reasoned with on points she could not understand; for it was a principle in our society, that the actions of children, for many years, flow from the heart, and have nothing to do with reason. Actions of real life were brought before her, and short observations made upon them. Tales were read to her. The passions were discriminated; and virtue and vice became as it were personified. It is in these lively personifications that the beauty of the former, and the hideousness of the latter are so plainly discovered, that we thrill with love, and shudder with disgust. My little Julia soon became enamoured of virtue, and the emotions and passions of her heart thence took their bias. This great and chief object secured in its proper train, the tasteful accomplishments were begun by tolerable masters from Stratford; and occasional short visits to town for the express

purpose, gave her an elegant finish, so that at seventeen, dancing, painting, and music, were become a part of her nature.

Her person was a fit temple for such a lovely spirit: she was not tall, rather above the middle size, with striking symmetry. But it was in her countenance that her beauty was most conspicuous. The size of her forehead could not be distinguished on account of the natural ringlets that played around it. Her nose was gently aquiline, inclining to length, without being long: her under lip was at least a third larger than its ruby companion, and they inclosed two even rows of white and healthy teeth, which were often displayed to the greatest advantage, by smiles fraught with as much grace as ever surrounded a mouth. The contour of her face inclined considerably more to sharpness than rotundity, so that the lower part was clearly marked, yet without the chin ending too much in a point. The shape of her eyes, aided by the pliancy of their brows, was most expressive, and the eyes themselves, which were of a dark nut-brown colour, possessed a brilliancy that captivated the soul. When any of the finer emotions occupied her features, the effect was ineffable. In short, my Lord, she was one of the most beautiful young creatures I ever saw, nor, in my opinion, less so that her complexion was not fair: Julia was a clear brunette, whose skin was heightened with the bloom of health. To complete my account, let me add, that having been early indulged considerably in using her tongue, her language became fluent and choice, attended with animation and the graces of motion.

Having been writing almost till day, I stand in need of rest, my Lord, and I think if I can break off my subject any where, it is where I leave your

Lordship contemplating so sweet a picture. I will soon resume my history. Adieu.

LETTER IV.

CHARLES TO PERCIVAL.

A request.

Dear Edward,

An uncommon run of ill-luck last night obliges me to apply to you for a loan. Send me a check on your banker for five hundred pounds. I will return it the first favourable moment. You see, brother, I take your advice of not invading my remaining capital in the funds. I have no doubt of soon repaying you, and I know you will make no scruple in lending the trifle I write for. On our return from Newmarket, Brainless and I will make a trip to the Elms for a day.

Your affectionate brother,

CHARLES PERCIVAL.

LETTER V.

PERCIVAL TO CHARLES.

The request granted, with a little morality.

My dear Charles,

The enclosed is at your service for whatever time you please. It is perhaps not a very delicate opportunity to give you the caution which arises in my

mind; yet, if my brother will not be angry, I will entreat him to reflect on the uncertainty of chance: I will supplicate him to relinquish pursuits which, added to the liberalities of his heart, may soon overthrow that independence of which he so strongly feels the desire.

Forgive me, my dear Charles, if I put you in mind that the fortune you received on the death of our excellent father is already diminished to the half of its original amount; and that too when at one time you had, by the deceitful sport of chance, nearly made it double. I know that gaming is in you an acquired delight; that it is not natural to your disposition; and that your losses are entirely your own, while your winnings are divided with every necessity that comes to your knowledge. What infatuation in you, who have not even the desire of money to plead in its extenuation; in you who have a mind and propensities that want not such an aid to the enjoyment of life! Come to us, instead of going to Newmarket. I know Sir Richard Brainless to be too much attached to the turf, to extend my invitation to him. Julia, who you know loves you, presses you to come, and as a farther inducement, let me tell you that our friend Towers is now with us. The country too is delightful, and we will plan some excursions for your amusement.

LETTER VI.

CHARLES TO PERCIVAL.

Damn his morality.

My dear, moral brother,

I THANK you for your moral and your money; my sister for her kind invitation, and I send my regards to Mr. Towers; but it is not possible for me to break my engagement.

LETTER VII.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

A shield for the female heart—An artifice—A picture and its original—Love at first sight.

I LEFT your Lordship contemplating the graceful figure and beautiful face of Julia Bevil, at the age of seventeen; the very age at which I contrived to bring Edward to contemplate her. Julia had been so pleasingly occupied in the progress of her attainments, that her heart had required no relief, no relaxation; all was ease, all was pleasure, and though she possessed a full share of the admiration of the country, had a train of aspirers to her smiles, and could command a choice, yet so highly had her imagination wrought the picture of the man she thought worthy the character of a husband, that her heart had gone securely through all the attacks of flattery, had danced untouched through the usual dangers of the ball, and had repelled the stolen whispers of seductive passion.

From among the subjects to which we were continually bending her attention, love, so far from being excluded, held a distinguished rank, and the real points of view from which that charming passion was surveyed secured her from those false allurements, by which the giddy, the thoughtless, and the vain of her sex, are made victims of a spurious desire, as much beneath the dignity of genuine love, as folly is beneath wisdom. But though free from any particular attachment, her heart was not the less susceptible; nor was this passion dormant to a judicious eye. It was discernible in nature's purest sketches; it beamed on her features, played upon her limbs, peeped from her smiles, and moved upon her words, but it had not reached her heart: it gilded her unconscious form with its brilliancy, but the flame continued latent for want of its object.

While descanting on the perfections of men, I artfully insinuated personal descriptions of Edward, without openly alluding to him; and sometimes sketched his features with my pencil, on slips of paper, which I always tore, and I had by degrees so impressed my young friend upon her mind, that she began to annex all that was amiable to the imaginary figure, and only waited to see it, and to find herself not mistaken, to be in love. I practised the same artifice upon him, when, after his father's death, I resided at the Elms. Never was there a heart more uncontaminated by vicious passions than his; for, although he had been early informed of the nature of the passions, the worthy Stockton had taken care that he should know them without feeling the poison of their influence. The time for such caution was now past; and rejoicing to find that he had never yet yielded his heart to beauty, I prepared him to become the lover of Julia. With the description I have given your Lordship of her, I

mingled every female virtue, and dwelt on animated pictures of the charms of marriage and domestic bliss. He listened, and grew enamoured of the images of fancy. "Oh, Towers!" would he say, "now that I have lost both my parents, that I seem "cast out of the domestic circle, what bliss would "be mine could I recover it with such a being as "you paint! I am already in love with the creature "of your imagination; but where, where is she to "be found? Alas! my friend, I know, from all I "have heard and read, that the generality of women "are vain, fickle, and more devoted to self-love than "to that love we talk of, which exists but in idea. "Ah! tell me, Towers, tell me sincerely, if, in your "life, you have ever found, if, in your heart, you be-"lieve there lives such a woman as you have pictured, "such an assemblage of spirit, heart, and person?"

I thought it prudent to discourage the hope of finding such a creature, but I kept the emblem alive in his thoughts, and when grief for the loss of his parents had matured into veneration for their memory, I resolved upon presenting Edward and Julia to each other. I was certain that their union could not but be agreeable to my friend Bevil, yet I was unwilling that a scheme of so delicate a nature should leave on his mind the slightest consciousness of his having joined in concerting it: for, though his Julia's portion was a very respectable one, and her pretensions in every other point equal to any situation in life, yet certainly Percival's estates, in a lawyer's estimate, were much beyond the fortune that her father could bestow.

Edward had repeatedly declared to me that he had always considered beauty as the object rather of admiration than of love; that he had seen many beautiful women who had created very pleasing emotions in his breast, but emotions he could hardly

distinguish from such as he had been sensible of on looking at pictures; and that he feared the notions he had formed of the sex had rendered his heart incapable of love. I asked him if he had ever received any particular marks of favour or kindness from a female, and his answer convinced me that he had hitherto found no mistress but among the Muses. From them I purposely diverted his attention, and he began to join so willingly in talking of the tender passion, that I was not without apprehension of my project being disconcerted by the first kind beauty he met, if I did not take care to let that beauty be Julia; I therefore made a sudden proposal to him, one fine morning in the autumn, to make an excursion in his phaeton to the lakes; and, as he was a devotee of Shakspear's, to spend a day or two at Stratford, which was in our way: the Elms being near Woodstock, we had only to pass through the northern part of Oxfordshire, and a part of Warwickshire. He embraced the proposal with eagerness, and we started without delay, attended by a single footman. Although I had said nothing of my god-daughter, in particular, to Percival, he was well acquainted with the name of Bevil, and had often heard me talk of Bevil-lodge. That we should take up our abode there was what he expected as a matter of course, and I had already apprized Bevil of our intention.

Edward, to a fine person and engaging countenance, added a frankness of address that seldom accompanies a youth from college, but which was in him the genuine effect of an open and warm disposition. Bevil and he were mutually pleased with each other. When we arrived, Julia and her mother were from home. My friend met us at the garden gate, nor did we enter the house till from an hour's conversation, under a shady walk on the banks

of the Avon, he had made a considerable progress in his acquaintance with Percival: he then conducted us to the library. A picture that hung over the chimney-piece caught Edward's eye, and I perceived he was endeavouring to recollect where he had seen the original, but I took no notice of this; and Bevil leaving the room to give some orders, I put a very curious book of scarce prints into Edward's hands; and taking another, threw myself into a chair on one side, in order to observe the progress of his discovery. He turned over his leaves, but his eyes were fixed on the portrait. At length, not being able to realize the imaginary being on whom he had been feasting his ideas, he burst forth into an exclamation of, "Good heavens! how very like! yet "I cannot remember where I have seen her."—"What is the matter, my friend?"—"I am struck," said he, "with the features of that face, and have "been endeavouring in vain to recall to my mind "the person, whom I certainly have seen some-"where."—"The features are fine, and they belong "to a noble minded girl, Percival, but you never "saw her: it is the portrait of ——." Before I could finish my speech, Julia, who had returned home without her mother and had flown to embrace me, opened the door, and threw herself into my arms: she then turned to Percival, and I had the delight of perceiving a suffusion on her cheeks enough to convince me that she had not been less careful in preserving the features of his countenance, than he had been in preserving hers from the colouring I had given to each.

You know, my Lord, that I hold the weak notion of people *falling in love*, as it is termed, to have nothing to do with the noble passion of love itself. They are entirely different things, and moved by different principles; yet to have viewed the living

picture that then stood before me, your Lordship would have questioned my doctrine; but recollect that although Edward and Julia then saw each other for the first time, they had for months been under the dominion of imagination, and had been heaping all that was virtuous, all that was amiable, all that was kind, upon the person of each other; that, in fact, they were fully in love before, and what you would have called their falling in love, was only the uncommon surprize of their meeting, for the first time, each the unknown object that had been so long mutually cherished by their hearts. Figure to yourself, my dear Lord, an elegant youth, turning from a portrait that had raised his admiration, to the charming original, of whom his fancy had long been in quest, his blood rushing through his whole countenance, and his eyes sparkling, while admiration, surprise, and love, press upon his soul. See a lovely, blooming, young woman, from whose eyes spring a thousand beams of beauty, and in whose every gesture plays a grace, darting a look of conscious recollection on the object to whom she had often in secret promised her heart to devote its best affections. Without waiting an introduction, impelled by the collected force of imagination and reality, they sprang involuntarily towards each other; but suddenly recollecting themselves, made an abrupt stop, exclaiming both at once, "I beg your par-" don." Julia first recovered herself, and, with inimitable grace, retrieved the confusion she had fallen into, declaring she had taken him for somebody else. Edward awkwardly excused himself by saying that he had been looking at her picture till he had fancied himself one of her old acquaintance. I then introduced them, with an assurance that friendship depended more on similarity of minds than on

length of time, and that I had no doubt they would soon find themselves old friends.

I saw, my Lord, that I had successfully effected my project in sowing the seeds of love, and I was overjoyed beyond expression; but the plant was to be reared, and to be made strong enough to bear the tests of life. As I take great delight in minutely recalling these occurrences, I do not discourage myself with a thought that they can be otherwise than agreeable to your Lordship, and in my next I shall continue my account of Edward and Julia.

We have lately had a visit from Lord Chopstone, who is now at his seat in this neighbourhood. My letters have been so engaged with the dear possessors of the Elms, that I have not had a thought of entertaining you with the occurrences and characters that here occasionally offer themselves to my view. Subjects there are in abundance; and, when they do not interrupt a more agreeable one, they shall have their turn.

LETTER VIII.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY..

A hint to parents on the subject of love—Cupid blind—Another that has sight—A party of pleasure—True love timid—Passion under the dominion of good sense—An effusion of nature—A hint to the fair sex—The candour of a pure and sensible young woman—A hint to lovers and to husbands.

Love having thus taken possession of the hearts of Edward and Julia, soon after appeared in full triumph. Convinced of the mutual impression that had been made, I no longer deemed it necessary to exclude Bevil from the participation of a pleasure and of an event in which he was so materially con-

cerned. My friend, who was nearly as much enamoured of Edward as Julia was, received my communication, as I thought he would, with infinite pleasure; and pressing my hand with that delightful ardour that flows to the palm when the heart is agitated by the springs of affection, he declared that his cup of joy was full, and that to see his Julia united to such a youth as Percival was the extent of his earthly wishes.

Having imparted our joy to Mrs. Bevil, who shared it with the feelings of a fond mother, we agreed to suffer their passion to take its own course, and neither to throw difficulties in its way, nor appear to assist its operations. Bevil knew as well as myself that in love the heart is proud of its own choice, and that it is a vain attempt openly to direct this passion. The only wisdom of a parent on the occasion is, in acting to appear passive; to point out perfection in the abstract, and to lead a daughter to the discovery of it in the person whom he approves. Love is one of the most liberal passions, and will not be constrained. The sex may be taught to live upon their guard against it, but never will be taught to admit it at the direction of another: and so it should be. I will not say barely that to love by command is against nature; I affirm it is one of those incompatible things that never can take place. When a young woman fortunately gives her heart to the choice of her parents, it is coincidence: the choice is hers as well as theirs, and she would have loved unbidden. In the present instance, my dear Lord, you see, although not a parent myself, I have set an example to all parents, to guardians, and to friends. Knowing that perfection is the object of love, and kindness its fuel, I attached the former to the features of my friend, and the latter naturally followed.

Your Lordship may, perhaps, tell me that this is a mere refinement on the art of match-making; that praise is the amulet of the match-maker; that flattery keeps bad qualities in shade while it magnifies or makes up a merit to the dazzled eye; and that wretchedness is the certain consequence of disappointed love. Granted, my Lord; and in reply I shall only ask you, if the virtues have not all their approximate vices, which resemble them, and from which it is often difficult to distinguish them? But as your Lordship separates justice and rigour, prudence and cowardice, economy and avarice, fortitude and apathy, so the amiable art of uniting congenial spirits is to be distinguished from the abominable artifice that ensnares the weak, the passionate, or the unwary. It is very remarkable how similar are the means with which virtue and vice work: the ends are ever widely different, but frequently sincerity is all the difference in the means; as in the instance that has suggested these observations.

Edward and Julia were now lovers, but lovers of a very uncommon stamp. Young as they were, and by nature fully open to the impressions of the senses, they had been both early made acquainted with the course of the passion, and well knew that it led to the greatest bliss, or greatest misery of life. I had drawn them imperceptibly within the verge of its dominion, but they knew how to step out of it again, should they discover that they had unwarily taken the path that leads to misery. They had investigated the blindness entailed on Cupid, and were sensible of the good grounds for it, from the general practice of lovers; but they had discovered that generality and perfection were seldom companions, and that there was a God of Love who was not blind; that he was the genuine deity, that the path he pointed out was not only flowery but secure, and led to endless

joys; whereas the blind God strewed his flowers on rugged ways, and by dangerous precipices; that he decoyed through brakes and briars, and that his course was short, his votaries ever running upon impenetrable masses, or terminating their passions in one or other of the gulphs that present themselves every where throughout his empire.

On the evening of the second day Bevil proposed a prolongation of our visit, and was seconded by Julia with a spirit which evinced that the candour of her heart was not to be effaced by her passions. We consented to pass a third day at Bevil-lodge, on condition that the Bevils agreed to join in making a party with us to Westmorland. How delicious is love in the bosoms of youth and innocence! how did it sparkle in the eyes of Edward and Julia on this arrangement! A third day was agreeably spent on the banks of the Avon, and as little preparation was necessary, we set out on the fourth, Mrs. Bevil, Julia, and I, in their post-chaise, Edward and Bevil in the phaeton.

Travelling for amusement, we were in no haste, nor cared to crowd many miles into a day. The hours of baiting and refreshment were the pleasantest, and passed in rambles around the spot, or in lively sallies at the table. Never was a party furnished with better foundation for spirits, or more pleased with one another and themselves. Bevil and his wife had in view an accomplished youth, whose beauty of person was equalled by his mental endowments, and whose virtues were rendered brilliant by an ample fortune: Edward and Julia reciprocally enamoured, had in view the developement of the disposition and character of each other: and I had in view a happiness of which I had been the efficient cause. Every day, every hour, added fresh laurels to the brow of the God of Love, as incidents thronged

upon the lovers to rivet their affection and esteem. Nothing was uncommon, nothing tinctured with the character of romance; the incidents were the usual incidents of life, but they occurred to rare spirits, and were under the influence of uncommon minds. Whether misery was to be relieved, virtue to be exalted, or vice to be condemned, the hearts of Edward and Julia were in perfect unison, and it never could be said with more justice, that lovers were formed for each other.

It was on the return from our excursion, the landscape of which is familiar to your Lordship, that I first suffered myself to understand the repeated hints Edward had given me of his desire that Julia should supersede her father in the phaeton. The remark on the timidity of true love is founded in nature. A common lover would have made the request without hesitation and without a blush: Percival, conscious of what was passing in his heart, reddened even at his hints. At Litchfield, after supper, I wickedly proposed that Mrs. Bevil should ride home in the phaeton next day, to which Edward, with as much sincerity as he could, pressed her compliance; and Bevil declaring at the same time that he wanted some communication with me, I so managed as to have it agreed upon. The disappointment had a sudden effect on Edward's tongue; he became less talkative, and sometimes totally absorbed in meditation. He had set his heart upon a day's uninterrupted conversation with Julia, and, in spite of his hints, he now found the only day left torn from his hope. He did not say, "cruel Towers!" but he looked a world of intelligible impatience at me. Next morning Mrs. Bevil, who had entered into my plan, declared her fears of finding her head unfit for the loftiness of the phaeton, on which I said I positively would not resign my

place in the chaise. "Besides," cried Edward, "Mr. Bevil wished your company."—"How shall we "manage it?" replied I. His eyes were turned on Julia, and hers upon her father, who said there was but one way, which was, if Mr. Percival would permit———. He had got no further, when Edward exclaimed: "Good heaven! permit! it is what I "have been most ardently longing for, but dared "not ask." Julia, who perceived the premature interruption, crimsoned her face and neck with the blood of her heart, and fearing that I was going to lay the detection open, hastily cried, "Mr. Towers, "you shall not leave us." Bevil relieved her and her lover by supposing he had said what Edward understood, and continued, that he doubted not of Percival's politeness, but from what his daughter had said of detaining her friend Towers in the chaise, he apprehended that her head was still more unfit for the phaeton than her mother's. Julia, in whose bosom candour was a distinguished virtue, put an end to the debate, secretly preconcerted by Bevil and me, by saying frankly, that at all events she should like to make the trial, although at the same time she forgot that she had the moment before said I should not leave her. The delight that Edward experienced was perfectly visible to three of us, and would have been so to the fourth, had she not been fully engaged with her own sensations.

The lovers took possession of the phaeton, and a poet, my Lord, had little difficulty in transforming them in personal appearance to the son of Cinyras and his goddess, the latter of whom had relinquished the reins of her birds to the beautiful youth; and it was just as easy to metamorphose Edward's greys into Venus's swans, and the black leather into silken cords: the phaeton was really a car. But without my stilts, and unaided by imagination, I saw posi-

tively before me specimens of English beauty, both masculine and feminine, that might have defied the rest of the world to match it, and which certainly could not be surpassed.

I know not whether the chaise or the car bore the happiest hearts: the emotions might be different, but the degrees were equal in their kind: what I allowed to the ardour of youth, was made up by that ardour forming the foundation of a double bliss in the hearts of the fond parents. Edward kept his carriage constantly in sight, and I observed that although their conversation never failed, it took generally a serious cast: I afterwards learned from him that he spent that whole day in scrutinizing the heart of Julia, in order to determine whether he should combat the impulse he felt to devote his own to her, or yield to it without resistance. He said that he had become sensible of the progress love had made in his soul, and that if he had found strong dissimilarities in their opinions, or a discouragement of his passion, it would have behoved him immediately to shun an object that might in some instance shake his repose, by separating in his heart the emotion of desire from the passion of love. "But I find her, "Towers," cried he, in an ecstasy of joy; "I find "her not more formed to precipitate the glowing "blood through my transported frame, than to ex- "cite the rapture of my soul with the admiration of "her virtues. Yes, my friend, I find her formed for "love, for that love which you have sometimes told "me of, which I long doubted was ideal; and my "heart is Julia's; 'tis Julia's, Julia's, Julia's."

How delicious, my dear Lord Digby, are the pure effusions of nature! This scene passed the morning after our return to Bevil-lodge. Edward had risen very early, and I found him meditating in the garden. In pronouncing "'tis Julia's," his appear-

ance would have been a great treat to you, as it was to me. His attitude was firm, his right hand pressed his heart, his left was raised towards heaven; his cheeks glowed with his transported blood; his eyes overflowed with life, and his words gave a passage to his soul. I took his hand and pressed it, whilst I gave him joy of his discernment, and I completed his ecstasy by assuring him that I was persuaded the heart of his mistress was not only disengaged from others, but that it was also favourable to him. I then expatiated at length on her charms, informing him of the share I had taken in her education, and before we parted he had dismissed every thought of caution, resigning himself completely to the dominion of Love.

Thus become his confidant, I did what confidants in general do, but perhaps on better grounds; I soothed his passion, and I fanned his flame. I was not, however, content with being his confidant, I determined to be Julia's too, and to have their nuptials delayed no longer than was sufficient to give to imagination a strength, on the continuance of which depends, if not the esteem of the passion, at least the fervency of its raptures. Men should believe their mistresses goddesses before they find them women; and women should persuade their lovers that their divinity is not lost in the discovery, which can only be done by the culture of imagination. Their virtues will always speak to the understanding, and secure esteem; but it is to fancy they must owe the desirable witchcraft that envelopes their persons with ceaseless attractions; and therefore it is, that constancy is rarely, if ever, secured but by those who, with their beauty, combine the magic of taste.

As we were to spend a few days at Bevil-lodge before we set out for the Elms, I sought an early

opportunity of talking alone with Julia on the subject now nearest her heart, and I was more delighted with the part she bore in the conversation than I can express. After repeating our opinions on love, long before not new, I drew her to the point, by saying, I believed her to have a heart susceptible of the passion; and I looked rather than spoke my meaning. "Indeed," said she, "you can have had "no difficulty in penetrating the recesses of a mind "which you have so greatly assisted in forming, nor "can I blemish the candour of it by insincerity to "you. Yes, my friend, I believe I now feel that "emotion of which we have often talked, and for "which you have prepared me by showing me how "to guard myself against the spurious affection that "usurps its name. But I confide in your prudence; "for although I believe I have been happy enough "to inspire it too, yet I have not been addressed "upon it, and it behoves me to preserve secresy, "lest a mistake should render self-conquest neces-"sary." I pressed the lovely blushing girl to my heart, and prayed a thousand blessings on her; but I too well knew to whom the sweets of the declaration belonged, to divulge to either the confidence I doubly enjoyed.

Foreseeing the regret with which Percival would return to the Elms, I hinted to him that I had some affairs of my own to arrange, which I should now wish to attend to, if I could leave him in such agreeable society as the Bevils; but which I would postpone in order to go with him into Oxfordshire, for the remainder of his mourning, if he would not stay at the lodge. "Not stay at the lodge! My soul is "at the lodge, Towers."—"And therefore is it, Ed-"ward, that I would have you hover round it, and "secure it for ever. Youth is precious, and its "moments ought not to be lost. At your age, life

" is the field of love; and love, true and honourable " love, is the husbandman, not only of pleasure, but " of virtue. It soothes the cares of adversity, it com- " pletes the joys of prosperity; to poverty it imparts " the riches of industry and ingenuity, and on wealth " it confers the glow of liberality and benevolence. I " leave you, my dear Edward, to improve your feli- " city, and I hope you will soon inform me of the " declaration and success of your passion. Could I " assist it, I would stay; but the delightful part is " your own, and my absence will be seasonable. " Before I go, let me impress upon you two maxims; " the one is, that constancy results from the union " of esteem and fancy; the other, that dreadful evils " spring from engaging in a love which is not fitted " to produce constancy. The only rule I can give " you, is never to divest the person of your wife of " the divinity with which your imagination clothed " it while she was your mistress, and to be sedulous " yourself in the preservation of every attraction, as " well of the person as of the heart. Remember " that it is vacuity which requires the charm of no- " velty; keep the soul replete with genuine bliss, " and the desire of change will never make head " against the power of pure and mutual love." He embraced me ardently, and declared that my maxims should be treasured in his mind, as he was convinced that the duration of love depended upon them; that the passion of which constancy was not a component part, and whose termination was foreseen, could not be the passion of a noble mind, and that in general the cooling of the heart towards the object once adored proceeded from the weariness of unoccupied hours, and the inaction of sensibility.

Having informed Bevil of the crisis at which my project was now arrived, he invited Edward to re-

main some time with him, and I left the lovers to the progress of their passion, after obtaining their promise separately to write frankly to me of all that occurred, and all that passed in their hearts. The letters I received from Bevil-lodge during my absence, are at this moment in the escritoir at which I am writing, and as I know they will gratify your lordship's taste, at the same time that they will gain your affection for my friends, I will make a packet of them for you. Letters which I esteem sufficiently to preserve, I generally lay together unfolded, according to their subjects, in covers of thick paper, leather, or pasteboard, forming them into books to prevent the creases from injuring them. These you will receive in that manner; and I need not tell you, that they form a part of my treasures.

Adieu, my dear Lord, I know you will not be sorry that the past has occupied the present; *hæc meminisse:* the present is also interesting, and we will catch it as it passes; meanwhile we will both rest after so long a letter. My next shall accompany my Bevil-lodge packet.

The Bevil-Lodge Packet.

LETTER IX.

PERCIVAL TO PHILIP TOWERS.

Progress of love—Embarrassment—A song.

My dear Towers,

THE more I consider my nature, the more am I astonished at the effects of this composition of man.

What have been my sensations since I saw Julia Bevil! I am not the same Edward Percival, who last year, with the philosophic Stockton, in the calm retreats of Oxford, coolly investigated the unfelt passion that has now seized upon my soul, and animates my whole frame. My hopes, my fears, my thoughts, my very existence, Towers, all are new. I never tasted, I never imagined there was so much bliss on earth. Philosophy may propound to us cause and effect, beauty and admiration, kindness and love, but never could impart that knowledge which I have imbibed from Julia's eyes, from Julia's mouth, from Julia's graceful form. I am indeed in love. It fills all my thoughts, directs all my words, warms every vein, and prompts every action. When I but think of Julia, the elevation of my soul is beyond what I conceived in the nature of man; but when she smiles upon me, smiles with that ineffable expression which conveys ten thousand times more tenderness than all the verses of Ovid and Tibullus together, I feel myself sublimed to a state to which I can give no epithet but celestial. Yet, unaccountable to say! while I feel myself thus exalted, and my soul thus expanded, I am sensible of a timidity which I never felt before. Julia is so lovely, that when I approach her, I doubt my being worthy of her; she is so beautiful, that when I gaze at her I tremble with the extent of my wishes, and I blush lest her father should penetrate the desires of my heart. This is one of the paradoxes of nature, which teaches us to love, yet in her sweetest lessons enjoins us to conceal what she teaches.

It is now three days since you left us, and I have had but one opportunity to speak alone with Julia. I had fully determined to seize the first to declare my passion to her; but when it presented itself I

was struck mute, a universal trepidation pervaded my frame, I faltered, and was silent. Julia observed my embarrassment, and I have no doubt divined my intention, but such was her own perplexity, that she failed to give me sufficient encouragement, if she means to do so at all. Her mother had been called from us while we were chatting under the Elm-row. I am confident that Julia secretly debated whether to accompany her into the house, or remain with me, for Mrs. Bevil was half-way before she moved or spoke, and then she very slowly walked the contrary way, without once looking at me. I continued the same pace by her side, till at the spot where the walk serpentines and shuts the house entirely out of view, after looking back as if afraid of what I was going to do, I stammered out—"Miss Bevil;" on which she abruptly quickened her pace to a degree of speed that looked as if we were walking for a wager. I had frequently said many kind things to her without agitation, but bent on fully declaring the excess of my love, and feeling that the whole happiness of my life now depended upon her, the emotion of my spirits at the moment that was to decide my fate choked my voice, and nearly suspended all my faculties; nor did I recover till I found myself at the door of the music-room, and was thus addressed by Julia: "Our silent walk inclines me to think, Mr. Perci-"val, that music would be agreeable to us both; "shall I sing you a song?" She entered as she spoke, and Mr. Bevil joined us at the same instant. He must have perceived my confusion; but if he did, he took no notice of it, and his angelic daughter drew both his attention and mine to a song I never heard before, to which her voice, now fully recovered, gave such delicious tones of tenderness,

that had I not been fully in love before, they would have completed my passion. The words are,

I.

Oh! cease thy song, sweet Philomel!
Be hush'd the voices of the grove,
Let only favouring zephyrs swell,
To waft my sighs to him I love.
Ah! no! sweet bird! thy strain prolong,
And court him hither to my breast;
Allure him with thy magic song,
By love to bless and to be bless'd.

II.

Sweet melody the mind inspires,
And melody, sweet bird, is thine;
Enchant thou him my soul desires,
To emulate a love like mine.
Sweet Philomel! prolong thy strain,
Accordant to a lover's breast,
And hither charm my absent swain,
By love to bless and to be bless'd.

Both words and music found my heart alive to their impressions, and had I not been restrained by the presence of Bevil, I should have forgot my timidity, and clasped the cherub in my arms.

She is retired to dress for dinner, and as I am expeditious in changing my clothes, I employ the hour in writing to you. At this moment Julia is before her glass; she must be nearly dressed. Perhaps her thoughts are consulting the taste of her lover; perhaps she says, "I will wear this bandeau, for "Edward praised it; I will put this carnation in "my bosom, for Edward gathered it." Oh! Julia! Julia! couldst thou but look into my bosom, thou wouldst find that thy mirror presents thee not a truer image of thyself than is reflected there.

The dinner-bell is rung. Adieu! my friend; expect to hear more courageous achievements of me soon. Adieu.

LETTER X.

JULIA TO PHILIP TOWERS.

An agitation.

YOUR friend is in love with me; more desperately in love than I suspected, and I have left him with my father and mother at their wine, to come and tell you so. Not a word has he said to me of it however; but I say desperately, because it deprived him of his speech at the moment he was going to declare himself. Amiable Edward! his embarrassment and his silence spoke his passion more truly and more eloquently than language could have expressed. His countenance, his air, his manner, were mirrors in which I saw myself reflected at his heart. In the morning my father went to Stratford upon some urgent business relative to the election, and my mother, Mr. Percival, and I, walked in the garden. After some time, my mother was called in. Shall I own it to you, my dear friend? I knew not how to behave. Sufficient interchange of mind had passed through our eyes to make me look for a declaration from Mr. Percival on the first occasion that offered, and when I found myself on the point of being left alone with him, the consciousness of wishing it had nearly driven me in with my mother. I hesitated till she was too far, and remained with an agitation that must have been visible to your friend, had he not been equally, if not more, agi-

tated himself. We walked on at least five minutes without speaking. I saw him labouring for expression. I expected, I longed to hear the confirmation of his love. Not a word of it. At length he stammered out my name. What was the matter with me at the sound! My heart palpitated, my breath became oppressed, my knees began to tremble, and in hope of overcoming the fainting that threatened me, or of reaching the house before I gave way to it, I walked forward as fast as I could. My companion gave me time to recover myself, for word he spake not more, and when we got to the house I was no longer in danger from my trepidation.

What is the reason, my dear Mr. Towers, that your friend, who is so eloquent on other topics, finds more difficulty in declaring his sentiments on this than others do? You see I write with great assurance. You know I have had my swains like other damsels. Two of them honourably and boldly proposed marriage to me through my father, while another, as I was dancing with him at the assembly, fairly asked me to love him, and except in plays and in romances, I know no instance of this kind of fearful love. But, fool that I am to ask the question! I feel it is the token of a heart new to the dictates of the passion, and untutored in its wiles. I might as well ask why my mind was tranquil, and my answer ready to other wooers, yet my emotions so violent at the bare expectation of an address from one who had previously interested me in his favour? What am I about? Ought I to write thus even to you? Should a woman, and a very young woman, dare to write of her emotions for a lover? I believe not; but it is thus I satisfy my mind: you are a second parent to me; and I feel that I should be as frank with my father, who is dearer to me than my life, if he were to talk to me upon the subject.

Have not you and he combined to make me what I am, and shall a heart of your own forming be concealed from either of you? No, no; I am not wrong; I can have no better test of the uprightness of my mind than the readiness I feel to unbosom all its sentiments to both of you. I should start at myself were I to have thoughts I was unwilling to confide to counsellor so beloved; but those I impart ought not to make me blush.

Yes, my dear friend, I expect your Edward's declaration, I expect it with anxiety, and I should now be sorely disappointed indeed were he not to make it. But assure yourself I shall not be disappointed. I know that before three days are at an end he will have told me his heart is mine. How I may behave, or what say, *time and the hour* will determine.

The song you wrote at my request on our return, I have set to a tender melody, the which I sung to my mute lover with all the pathos I could give it this morning, when we were chased out of the garden by the centinels of the genuine God of Love. It unloosed the tongue of Edward. His rapture was so strong, and his applause so ardent, that I began to prepare for the speech that had been lost in the walk, even in the presence of my father, who had entered the music-room immediately after us; but he did not make it, and we soon after separated to dress.

My mother has just sent me word that I must make tea for my father and Mr. Percival, as she is going out on particular business. Good heaven! if my father should be called away in the afternoon as my mother was in the morning! My dear, dear friend, your Julia's heart again palpitates at the thought, and were she to say she did not wish it, she knows you would give her no credit for candour.

LETTER XI.

PERCIVAL TO PHILIP TOWERS.

Genuine passion—A smile of detection—Fascination—A declaration and an appointment—Some effects of love.

Dear, dear Towers,

WHAT is all this perturbation I feel? this boiling of the blood? this heat about the heart? Am I in a delirium? or is enchantment not fabulous? I shall be ill, my friend! I have sensations I never had till now. I am deranged, my frame will not support it. Come back, come back, Towers, and be my physician. Julia, the lovely Julia Bevil is mine, and I am mad, mad with ecstacy and love. Heavens! I have hitherto been but a school-boy pedant; Julia has made me a man. If I can collect my senses, I will tell you what has past within the few hours that have elapsed since I dispatched the letter I wrote before dinner to-day. I cannot sleep, I will try to write.

After sealing and dispatching my letter, I repaired to the dinner-room. Julia was there before me. The bandeau graced her hair; my carnation was in her bosom. The simple elegance of her dress was bewitching: a plain white robe, with a muslin sash of a deep mulberry stain; her hair flowed in their own natural ringlets, and her whole person was adjusted with such native ease that no effect of care was visible. At my entrance she smiled divinely, and through the whole of dinner was in high spirits. We formed a *partie carrée* of the family alone. After dinner, Julia left us to write a letter, and a most interesting conversation ensued between Mr. and Mrs. Bevil and myself, on

the subject of wedlock and domestic happiness. I could not help referring the whole to Julia and your friend, and thinking that her father and mother did so too. I felt their kindness in an uncommon degree, and I should have had courage to declare to them what was passing at my heart, had I not resolved that she who possesses it should be the first consulted about its fate.

Mrs. Bevil had a particular engagement, and the afternoon being very serene, Julia made our tea in the octagon-room on the lawn. With the tea equipage she had ordered her harp to be carried, and treated us with some delightful airs. I asked her if the song she sung in the morning was adapted to her harp. Smiling, she nodded the affirmative with an eloquence unknown to words; her eyes sparkled, her countenance was illumined with the whole force of her beauty, and she fingered her prelude with a grace and spirit new and irresistible: but when to the accompaniment she added her voice, with the exquisite tenderness of the melody, I became motionless, while my whole frame glowed with rapture, and my eyes were riveted upon the enchantress. The conclusion of the air bringing me a little to myself before the symphony was ended, I saw her father, who was sitting by her, viewing me with a look of penetration; the blood rushed into my face; he smiled: it was not the smile of gratification produced by the music, it was the smile of detection; and he kindly threw a veil on my confusion, by crying out to Julia the moment she finished the cadence, "Bravo, my sweet girl; go on, and sing it "over once more; both words and music are ex- "quisite." Saying which he walked to the door, and she went on; but my feelings were very different on the repetition. I sat down, still keeping in my mind the look and smile of Bevil; they

mingled with Julia's notes throughout the whole of the first stanza, and my sensations were confused between her powers and my own apprehensions of what might be passing in her father's thoughts. But in going over the second stanza, Julia diffused so much tenderness and expression through her countenance and gesture, dwelling her energetic nut-brown eyes upon me with a longer duration than she had ever done before; that I almost believed myself the person the nightingale was desired to call "to bless and to be bless'd by love;" and I became even more enchanted than I was at first.

The song was over, and the symphony completely finished, before I perceived that I was alone with the idol of my soul. For a moment the eyes of both went round the room in search of Bevil, but springing back, as by magic, they seemed immoveably fixed upon each other, and as if mutually perusing the contents of each other's heart. Oh! Towers! what a crisis! If ever the eyes spoke love, what a volume of the passion was poured from ours! I read my happiness too plainly to doubt it, and I was darting forward to catch her in my arms, when stretching forth hers in opposition, she cried, "Stop, Edward, stop and hear me speak."—"No, "Julia, no; hear me speak first."—"Do then, "Edward; but pray speak calmly, and act calmly, "for indeed I—I tremble."—"Julia!—I love you, "Julia!" I caught her hand as I said this. "I "know it, Edward." Good God! with what a smile did she utter, "I know it, Edward!"—"Say "then, sweet Julia, that you love me." She looked at me with one of those looks that no words can paint, no painting can imitate, no imitation express; and recovering her firmness from the consciousness of the propriety of what she was going to say, she proceeded thus: "Mr. Percival, I am persuaded

" that my father, whose mind is as noble as it is " indulgent; and my mother, who is the most " amiable of women, not only esteem, but love you. " Were it not for this persuasion, I would instantly " discourage the passion you have avowed; for, so " congenial are my affections to theirs, that I know " I could never give my heart to a man whom they " did not approve. Although they have never " directly told me so, I divine from their conversa- " tions of late that the declaration you have now " made will be highly agreeable to them. Nay, to " be very candid, I am not without suspicion that " my mother's engagement and my father's sudden " departure at a moment when your countenance " gave so explicit an earnest of what has followed, " are not casual occurrences. I think too that they " imagine they have fathomed my sentiments, and " act thus with a view to my happiness. I must " repay their affection and their delicacy, and it " would afford my whole life a sweet reflection to " be disposed of by them. Quit then my hand for " the present, and meet me here to-morrow at sun- " rise."—" Celestial Julia!" cried I, " I feel the " divinity of your character; the sun that will rise " to-morrow, if he rise in all his glory, will scarcely " equal my heart in ardour, and nothing can it " know of the delicious perceptions with which my " flame is endued. Oh! may he rise propitious to " a love, upon whose like, in all his course, he never " shone!" I was grown bold, and would have kissed her hand, but gently withdrawing it, she bade me be obedient; then leaving the octagon, led the way to the house and retired to her chamber, having first requested me, on hearing that Bevil was gone out, to continue my walk till he returned, and not to expect to see her again before sun-rise. " Good night!" said she, looking at an

almanack she had taken out of her pocket; "good "night! Edward; see, it rises to-morrow at half-"past five." You, Towers, can imagine the impression this left upon my soul; I gazed till I lost sight of her; I listened till the sound of her footstep no longer reached my ear.

The evening was serene, the sun was still above the horizon. I left the door, and my steps spontaneously bent towards the octagon. The tea things had been removed before her last song, but her harp was still there. Inanimate as it now was, I remembered how it had vibrated on my frame, and I pressed it to my bosom. I endeavoured to compensate my lips for their disappointment of Julia's hand, by kissing a thousand times those strings that had so sweetly expressed their rapture at her touch; I acknowledged their sensibility, and told them of the rapturous sympathy of the chords of my own heart. Oh! wild, but delicious effects of the most exquisite of the passions!

This summer-house, you know, stands on an eminence commanding prospects of the country westward; my eye was caught by the broad and crimsoned disk of the descending orb of light. Variegated clouds, tinged with his ruddy rays, and bordered with his splendid gilding, gave assurance to the east of a superb Aurora, an assurance which filled my breast with a pleasure that never was experienced at Ispahan. I watched the deeply reddening ball, and as it sunk from my sight reminded it of half-past five.

While I stood meditating on Julia with more hope than fear, my eyes fixed on the departing brilliancy of the aerial landscapes, I built a thousand castles of love and bliss, and Julia was mistress of them all. Time slipped thus away, and I perceived not the approach of night till the deep shades of the

temple and its neighbouring dryads upon the lawn, showed me that the moon had been up some time. I walked to the opposite window to tell my love to Cynthia; and the smiling goddess told me in turn of her Endymion; assured me that nature and heaven were propitious to my passion, and that though her brother Phœbus would veil her face, she should not leave the hemisphere before I was blessed by the sounds of reciprocal love from the voice of my Julia.

What am I writing, my friend! Nonsense? or am I becoming a poet? and is it really true that Cupid assumes the Apollo? I was lost in these reveries when I felt a sudden tap upon my shoulder, and turning, beheld Mr. Bevil. Moon-light is favourable to lovers, and he was able to read nothing in my face; though, indeed, I was now fortified for the scene, nor should have declined the medium of language, but for my desire of first receiving the decision from the mouth of Julia.

He had been for Mrs. Bevil, and on their return not finding either Julia or me in the house, he had come in search of me. On our going in, Mrs. Bevil informed us that her daughter requested we would excuse her attendance at supper, at which we again resumed the conversation that had been so very grateful to us at dinner.

This, my dear Towers, has been the most tumultuous day of my life, but I own I would not have changed the tumults of it for the purest delight of tranquillity. Before I can send this letter;—it is near two o'clock;—three hours and a half must elapse before the lazy sun will rise. I know I shall not sleep, but I will undress myself, and endeavour to repose my agitated spirits. You, my friend, are sleeping in profound repose, at least I hope so; may all your nights be blessed with such repose!

My paper is exhausted; I will begin a new letter on a new sheet to-morrow.

LETTER XII.

MR. BEVIL TO PHILIP TOWERS.

A father blest.

Dear Towers,

My heart is grateful to the Almighty, and to you, for a happiness unalloyed. This dear girl and boy are not only the most lovely creatures in their persons, their minds possess a refinement on which angels may look with delight. I have conversed a great deal with Percival. His sentiments are pure and honourable, and combined with his actions, dignify our nature. I promised you he should have an early opportunity of proposing himself to my girl, and he had the whole of yesterday; the result of which has nearly given as much rapture to my heart as did the consent of her mother to crown my love. I have watched the countenances of both, and read at once the purity and excess of their affection; real, unsophisticated love has warmed and united their hearts, and I trust soon to see their hands united by the God of Marriage.

Edward and Julia are both now writing to you; and to them I shall leave the narrative of what has passed: I write chiefly to send you the enclosed. I know how you love Julia, how alive you are to her virtues, how much, dear Towers, you have contributed to forming them. Noble as you think her, peruse the enclosed and feel, as I do, how sweeter than ambrosia 'tis to have a virtuous child!

Last night she excused herself from joining us, and as it was not difficult for me to guess the cause of her absence, I was not uneasy. Before we went to bed she had an hour's conversation with her mother, who came to me enraptured at her conduct, and brought me the letter. We embraced and congratulated each other on the happiness we experienced in our loved girl; we blessed you, Towers, for her lover, a lover of such merit; and we joined in ardent thanksgiving to the eternal Disposer of love for the blessings that await our darling. Read, read, man! and be delighted, be happy, be blest; for I know thy nerves to be refined tubes that extract and distil the essences of bliss and misery; and as thy sympathy has often made thee quaff bitter draughts of the latter, take now a full bowl of the former.—Adieu!

LETTER XIII.

JULIA TO HER FATHER.

Sweeter than ambrosia is a virtuous child.

My dear Father,

The heart of your Julia is so riveted by affection to you, and to her dear mother, that no sentiments can or shall pass there which she will not lay open to you both. God and nature have put you in possession of my filial fondness; your kindness and your virtues have excited my love, esteem, and admiration. To you I owe my being, and to be truly blest I feel it necessary to owe to you also, in some measure, every happiness that accompanies it. It is my delight and my glory that the relation of my

person to you is not more marked than the congeniality of my mind. I have imbibed your sentiments, and emulated your virtues with fond ardour; I have felt myself in every thing your daughter; and to you every thought of my mind has been opened. I am persuaded that you are no stranger to what is now passing there without my communication. Your conversations, your looks, your actions, have conspired to persuade me farther, that our congeniality is not impaired. The familiarity with which you have accustomed me to talk to you upon all topics, would have prompted me to make my present communication the subject of a conversation instead of a letter; but, I know not how it is, I feel what I never felt before, that, though I am as innocent of intending wrong as I was when you used to carry me in your arms, I should blush in talking of it. You can, perhaps, account for this, and I believe it natural, without exactly knowing why it is so. My dear Sir, I need not tell you, for I am certain you know that Mr. Percival loves me; but it is my part to inform you that he has told me so.

As love has been among the subjects of Bevillodge discussion almost as long as I can remember, I cannot have been such a novice as to endanger the happiness of a father and mother so very dear to me, by an idle or hasty prepossession. I believe that I see Mr. Percival exactly in the light that you do; with this difference, that in my mind his merit may produce an effect beyond what it can in yours. The qualities of a lover, which have been so admirably drawn by my dear parents, have among my other acquisitions been faithfully treasured in my mind, so that I have been in no danger of suddenly losing my heart: before I can love, I must find those qualities. Ah! my dear Sir, were your judicious

plan more generally pursued by parents, few would have to suffer the misery or mortification of seeing their daughters throw themselves away at the impulse of capricious fancy. In my case, how utterly impossible would it be to feel partiality for a man who could not be agreeable to you! The very charms that are necessary to gain your regard and friendship are requisite to gain my love. Were sense, virtue, prudence deficient, neither your heart nor mine could be affected; where they were eminent, I am confident your judgment would corroborate my fancy. I have observed Mr. Percival; I have watched your opinion of him. You have pointed out those qualities in him with which you have been accustomed to adorn the character of a lover; you would not have done this had you meant to guard me against him. I have myself remarked in him those traces of your general painting, and as he has unequivocally declared himself the lover of your Julia, she waits but your permission to assure him of her approbation; a permission she is too candid to pretend a doubt of receiving. Still, should her imagination have misguided her into this opinion, let her beloved father and mother declare their wish that she should discourage his hope, and their Julia shall instantly discourage both his and her own; for she is convinced that no event in life, mingled with their disapprobation, can give her happiness. When Mr. Percival expressed his sentiments, which was just after you left us in the octagon—and, my dear father, you certainly left us on purpose—I frankly told him that your conduct demanded the highest degree of gratitude and delicacy from me, and that it would be a lasting pride to me to be disposed of by you. He nobly assented, and I have appointed to meet him at sun-rise in the octagon. Convey your wishes to me before you

go to sleep, and they shall rule the voice and conduct of your

JULIA.

P. S. Since I finished this letter, I have had a delightful conference with my dear mother, who has been equally ingenuous and kind. It has made my letter almost unnecessary; one essential use, however, it will serve; it will testify my fond affection and my duty. She will be the bearer of it to you, and as it now needs no answer, I will go to bed that I may be up with the sun. Your Julia is a happy creature.

LETTER XIV.

PERCIVAL TO PHILIP TOWERS.

The appointment kept—A rapture—A kiss—Happy parents.

Half past four.

THERE is just twilight enough for me to write by. As I foresaw, I have not slept; but I am refreshed, and the thoughts of Julia supply more than sufficient animation to compensate the loss of sleep. I am all alive, my friend, and impatient for the face of day. What a drowsy god is Phœbus!—Alas! what I took for the twilight, and supposed his harbinger,

Proves but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow.

Oh, Towers! if hope alone thus agitates my frame, how shall I bear the bliss of circling so sweet a woman in my arms, of pressing her to my heart, of tasting the ambrosia of her lips! Another hour,

and such bliss may be mine. Pray heaven it may not be attended with delirium !—It was the twilight. The streaks of deep yellow confirm it, and the rosy cheeks of Aurora already smile upon me. I fly to my appointment. The sun shall find me in the temple of Love; Julia, my brighter luminary, shall find me there.

12 o'clock.

I said she was mine; did I not tell you, Towers, she was mine? My friend, I am the happiest of men, Julia will be mine. What a morning of love! What hour of swelling triumph to our breasts! Mutually vanquished and victorious! both have gained the day, and Love triumphant reigns!

I rushed from my chamber as if I feared the speed of the horses of the sun, but I reached the octagon long before the obliquity of their guider's rays descended from the higher regions of the atmosphere. I became centinel at the eastern window. The ruddy morn was tinged with unusual variety of beauty, and at length the golden streams of light began to rush above the horizon. On the first glimpse I caught of the rising glory, I darted from the temple to an object of more attraction; I looked towards the lodge, and the radiance of my Julia hastening o'er the lawn eclipsed the forgotten beauties of the sky. I flew towards her; I caught her in my arms; I fell upon my knee, and almost worshiped her. Towers, when I caught her in my arms, by heaven! she pressed me to her bosom; pressed me to her bosom, Towers, and the aggregate of all my sensations from the hour of my birth, would be but as the gentle glow of a vernal zephyr, when compared to the ardent flame that played upon my heart when she pressed me to her bosom. The only words we interchanged were, Julia! and, Edward! I took her

right hand, on which I had imprinted a thousand kisses, into my left, and throwing my other arm round her waist, I supported her trembling to our favourite recess. There the God of Day witnessed the kiss we dedicated to the God of Love. But, as we entered, casting her eye upon the slab, she saw a letter, and breaking from me, she ran and seized it with the utmost trepidation. She looked at the superscription, and read aloud, "To Edward and "to Julia;" on which she put it into my hand, and I read what I now transcribe.

"The minds of Edward Percival and Julia Bevil "are worthy of each other; let them love, and love "wisely, and they have as fair a prospect of happi- "ness as ever presented itself to sublunary beings; "their happiness will crown that of

"ROWLAND BEVIL
and
"SARAH BEVIL."

Noble father! amiable mother, of the noblest and most amiable of daughters! I threw myself upon my knee, and, receiving her soft and delicate hand, consecrated to her a passion at once pure and ardent, and vowed that its constancy should be as lasting as my life. She raised me to her arms, and, as I enfolded her in mine, imprinted a kiss that I shall never forget, but which it were sacrilege to describe. It channeled a flood of new sensations, and every fibre of my heart poured forth the animated stream. Her eyes teemed with a softness she had never before admitted, and fixing them on me with all the magic power of the passion, she gently pressed my hand and said, "I esteem, I admire, and love you, "Edward." The words, the manner, are engraved indelibly on my heart. "I esteem, I admire, and "love you, Edward." I attempted to repeat my kiss, but she checked me. "No, Percival, no,"

cried she, "your worth, and the approbation of my "parents, sanction the proofs I have now given "you of the tenderness you have excited in my bo- "som; but the value I set upon your esteem, and "the respect I owe myself, forbid me to trifle "with the soft emotions of a passion not yet ratified "by the laws of society. Let us take counsel of the "charming note we have received this morning, "and *love wisely*, that we may love always."—"Fix "then, my lovely Julia," said I, "fix the day when "heaven and earth shall combine to ratify our emo- "tions, and tenderness be wisdom." She smiled, and vowed she expected to be courted for two years at least. "It will," cried she, "be very pleasant "to talk of love, and read love stories, and write "love letters."—"And will it not be equally plea- "sant with your husband, Julia?" replied I, "a hus- "band that will never cease to be your lover! never "cease to talk of love, to read love stories, and to "write love letters!"—"A LOVER-HUSBAND!" exclaimed she, "the thought delights me, and "building upon that hope, I will consent, if my fa- "ther thinks it right, to remit one whole year "of the time." I began to accuse her of cru- elty, but she was so playful on the accusation, and rallied my arguments with such vivacity, that she left it undecided, when we perceived Mr. Bevil coming towards us.

Time had flown unnoticed, veiled by the wings of Love, and the sun had nearly performed a third of his journey before Bevil's appearance brought into our minds that it was possible we might be ex- pected at breakfast. There was a benignity in his countenance that soon dissipated the flutter his pre- sence at first occasioned; when advancing he took our hands and putting them together, he said, with a most graceful fervency, "May the God of truth,

" of innocence, and of love, bless and protect my " children!" He then pressed my hand, which Julia had quitted to throw herself round his neck, and the triumph of paternal and filial affection filled with tears of the most amiable sympathy the eyes both of the father and the daughter: nor were mine, my friend, unmoistened. For some minutes we kept this affecting posture, in which we reciprocally assured one another of the unbounded esteem and love that reigned in our hearts; and Bevil having again kissed his Julia, and shook my hand which he still held fast in his, we returned to the lodge, where breakfast had been waiting full an hour. A similar scene passed in the embraces of the amiable Mrs. Bevil, and we sat down to our repast with four as happy hearts as ever were cheered by the smiles of love, the blessings of prosperity, and the consciousness of integrity.

I entreat you, my dear Towers, to return soon to Bevil-lodge; for I see that Julia, with all the candour of innocence uniting with the ardour of love, is nevertheless tinctured with the coyness of her sex,

That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won.

As soon as the business that took you from us is settled, pray return to assist me in persuading her to hear reason on the subject, when she talks of a twelve-month to come.

LETTER XV.

JULIA TO PHILIP TOWERS.

Julia's account of her conduct on Edward's declaration of love, well worthy of being imitated by all young ladies on similar occasions.

Oh! my prophetic soul!—but instead of three days I should have said three hours. Your friend is no longer mute, he is become the most eloquent of lovers; and your Julia is,—yes, to you I will say it, she is the happiest of women.

What I owned in the conclusion of my last to be my wish did actually happen; but no wonder! as my mother's engagement was preconcerted, for the very purpose of my father's leaving me alone with Percival. We drank tea in the octagon, after which I played upon the harp, and at his request I repeated your song. Never did a countenance more visibly display the secrets of a heart than did his in every line of his face, in every gesture of his graceful form, while I was singing; and that was the moment my father thought proper to slip away. My back being to the door while I sung, and Edward's eyes not being there, my song was over before we missed him. I was now convinced that this interview was as much my father's wish as mine; and in viewing your friend with the partiality I felt for him, I could not but be agitated with the most agreeable expectation my heart had ever known. Nor was I disappointed. The tumult of his mind got the better of him, and he would have been bold enough to have clasped me in his arms had I not repelled him. It was, I confess, with difficulty I prevailed upon myself to do it; but the gratitude I owe the dear authors of my being had long determined me never

to allow such unequivocal encouragement to any man on earth, before they had justified it with their express consent. I had early learned from you, my dear Mr. Towers, and I am sensible of the truth of the lesson, that all the witchcraft of love is to be exorcised by the ties of honour and the adjurations of virtue. When we admit the new guest into our bosom, however agreeable he may be, if he begins his acquaintance with combating the settled possessors of the mansion, and by making them uneasy, there would be little difficulty in joining against him, and putting him out of that possession which he could not retain without disturbing the claim of others. At least I speak for myself, who, under the tuition of you and of your dear Bevils, have been taught to estimate the respective value of all the passions, to know that the duration of their enjoyment depends upon their union with the virtues, and that without the prospect of duration all would be misery. Pleasing as the passion of your friend is to my heart, could a question arise between his felicity and that of my beloved parents, not a moment should I hesitate in deciding for the latter. Time and good sense might heal the disappointment of a lover; what power but death could ever remove the stings of filial ingratitude from the lacerated heart of a father?

I am, however, moralizing unseasonably, as in the present instance there is a perfect unanimity in happiness: an unanimity of which I was thoroughly sensible at the moment I opposed the ardour of your friend; but it was a delicacy due to my father and mother, to show that I wished them to regulate so important an event: I therefore postponed the declaration of my sentiments, which alas! was virtually making it, till this morning; and that our love might not be totally destitute of a spice of the

romantic, having been quite unattended with distress or difficulty, I made an assignation with my lover precisely at the rising of the sun, there on the spot where first he told his love.

I know you will be pleased with my conduct when I tell you that I passed the rest of the evening in my chamber writing to my father, and conversing with my mother. Heaven reward them! they both seem to have no farther view in life than my happiness, on which they fix their own. Having satisfied myself of their approbation, I went early to bed, and rose long before the sun, on whose approach I hastened to my appointment. Edward was there before me. I need not tell you the rest, my dear friend: he *made love*, and we forgot the time, till my father was obliged to come and call us to breakfast. And now is your Julia regularly classed with the votaries of the little God, trusting that his godship will be very benign to hearts over which his conquest has been equally easy and honourable: though, to be sure, Edward deserves some prank from him, for he immediately began to propose our devoting ourselves to another deity, before he had well made his bow to master Cupid.

You see I can jest *with his arrow at my heart.* I have never, my dear friend, given much credit to the necessity assumed by poets and novelists for plunging lovers into distresses and difficulties, and I am of opinion that sympathy spreads as much interest over two lovers, happy in their passion and esteem for each other, happy in the approbation of their friends, and happy in their circumstances, as over the torments of jealousy, opposition, and poverty.

I am now going to dress for dinner, and for Edward: yes, for Edward! henceforth it shall be my pride to consult his taste, and I intend to attempt

accomplishing myself in the art of combining through life the lover and the husband.

I hope it will not be long before you return to the lodge; meanwhile, adieu!

End of the Bevil-lodge packet.

LETTER XVI.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

[*With the Bevil-lodge packet.*]

An amiable pride in women—A marriage.

THE packet I send you, my dear Lord, will make a greater progress in my friend's favour than all the eloquence I could muster. Certain I am that you will read it with delight. The letters are the effusions of souls that with the polish of education retain the sensibility of nature. I soon returned to them, and united all my influence with Edward's to obtain an early day from Julia, who nevertheless so pleasantly blended hope and procrastination, that the whole winter was passed in courtship, and their marriage was not celebrated till the kalends of June following.

Virtuous women, my Lord, have a pride, and a very amiable one it is, in convincing their lovers that their chief pleasure in the passion consists in the enjoyment of the sentiment it produces, and that the surrender of their persons is more the result of complaisance than the effect of selfish desires. But this is a conduct I rather admire than approve; as the glory it acquires is clearly gained at the expence of the person they love: and though I would not have

the sex lose that glory by a precipitate yielding, I think moderation in their coyness more commendable than unnatural pretensions to needless restraint. As her union with Percival not only had the approbation but was the delight of her parents, and not a shadow of obstacle appeared against it, Julia Bevil had too much sense and ingenuousness to delay her lover's bliss longer than delicacy absolutely demanded, and she privately assured me, that very shortly after the period of his wearing mourning for his parents she would bestow her hand upon him. That period was in the spring, and in the month of June,

> ————to the nuptial bow'r
> He led her, blushing like the morn—All heav'n
> And happy constellations on that hour
> Shed their selectest influence.

Never, my dear Lord Digby, was there a happier concurrence of circumstances to render a marriage blessed: virtue, sense, love, unanimity, beauty, and fortune. They were, they are, and I trust will be through life as happy a pair as ever were joined in wedlock. Such was the delightful, natural, and uncrossed courtship of Edward and Julia: they have now been married some years, and are still as much lovers as they were on the day *she first pressed him to her bosom, and in the sight of Phœbus dedicated the virgin kiss to love.* Is it not with reason then that I said it was one of the most grateful treasures of my memory that I was instrumental to their union?

Edward is unexpectedly called to town on some important business. He has promised me to see your Lordship, and I shall make him the bearer of my packet, which his man will bring to your house as soon as he arrives. Little does my friend think that he is conveying the picture of his own wooing. Let

me hear from you soon, and give me something in return for the *bonne bouche* I now send you.

LETTER XVII.

JULIA TO PERCIVAL.

The affection of a wife and mother—A letter enclosed.

My dearest Edward, Elms.

THE enclosed letter was delivered to me this morning, and as I know the great interest you take in the welfare of the writer, I forward it without delay. That you will ever be esteemed and loved by all who know you, and who at the same time have any discernment, is not alone the suggestion of my fond heart: the letter I send you is another proof of my judgment and taste in having fixed that heart upon my Edward. I hope your absence will not be long: our Elms lose their charms when their dear master is away; even the smiles of your darlings, who are ever with me, go not so sweetly to my soul, as when accompanied with the smiles of their loved father. Hasten then back to us to gladden our hearts, and to give our home its greatest relish. Oh! that such a heart as yours should ever feel a pang! but the sorrows of sympathy become my Edward, and render him still dearer to me.

I earnestly pray for your success, and that you may be able to restore the peace of your friend. I have participated, I trust I have augmented, all your joys; be sure then you let me share and console all your griefs, I shall else be jealous, Edward. Your consolation in distress, your happiness in tranquillity shall ever be the chief study of my life. This

neither joy nor sorrow can ever alter or prevent, while a heart beats in the bosom of

Your

JULIA.

LETTER XVIII.

MISS COVERLEY TO PERCIVAL.

The commencement of a correspondence.

My dear Sir,

CONVINCED of the sincerity of your character, I cannot impute to unmeaning politeness the assurance you gave me of having pleasure in hearing from me; and knowing the interest you have ever taken in my family, I defer not to lay the foundation of a correspondence which promises so much gratification to myself, to say nothing of the improvement I may expect. Young as I am, the insipidity, frothiness, and at the same time self-sufficiency of the generality of the gay beings that flutter round me, serve to mark strongly the real value of one whom it is my good fortune to know and to prize. I am anxious to find out estimable beings, and to be worthy of their friendship. I may say with truth you rank highest in my mind: indulge me then with the satisfaction and advantage of your correspondence, and believe me the esteem I profess is not the phantom of words, but arises from a knowledge of your worth.

While I covet your regard and friendship, hold me not weak enough to flatter, or so bold as to make love to you: the former I despise, the latter would be sacrilege. Adieu for the present. I hope the charming Mrs. Percival and your boy and girl are

well; tell me that you and they are happy, and it will contribute to make me so.

LETTER XIX.

PERCIVAL TO MISS COVERLEY.

Insincerity the parent of flattery—Delight felt at praise very different from vanity.

London.

I AM proud of your friendship; and convinced of its sincerity, I will cherish it through life. I am happy in having added to the real blessings I already enjoy another in the attachment of a mind like yours. The letter you have written to me, were it the effusion of flattery, would mortify me beyond conception; but as a proof of your good opinion it raises me in my own. Let us remember that flattery is the expression of praise we do not believe to be merited, to the use of which neither you nor I can condescend; but to express the good opinion we seriously have is essential to friendship. I may not altogether merit the high praise you have bestowed upon me, but it is not flattery in you, if you believe what you say: neither is it vanity in me to be delighted, because though conscious of your overcharging my value, my delight springs from the acquisition of a friend.

You are very young, and have yet to learn much; and I wish, with all my heart, that in the attachments and friendships you have yet to form, you may never meet with less sincerity than you will find in him whom you have so early honoured with your regard. I have watched your character for some time past, and I pronounce it an uncommon

one; it requires a great deal of care to make it a happy one. From your heart I believe there is little to fear; it is a good one: on your head depends your happiness or misery. You have already gone beyond the ordinary limits of the reflection of your age, and without great care you will not be a happy being. The enthusiasm your heart is endowed with is an earnest of its goodness, but beware, beware, my friend, of the pride of intellect. Your heart is more likely to be led than to lead into error, and there is nothing more certain than that the best hearts at your age are the most likely to be betrayed.

I have more than once observed that the turn of thought and the nature of the taste you discover are in so young a woman dangerous to happiness. The candour of your correspondence may enable me to give you the aid of friendship in avoiding the rocks and shoals through which you have to steer; and be assured that I shall ever continue to be interested in your safety.

I thank you for your kind expressions respecting Mrs. Percival and my little ones. I am not with them: an unhappy affair has brought me to town; but I know they are well. Nature, my dear Miss Coverley, has formed me to feel conjugal and paternal love in an exquisite degree; and the term you apply to my Julia was fully calculated to make its way to my heart. I hope you will know more of her, and that you will, by and by, come amongst us: you will find her justifying your epithet to its full extent.

LETTER XX.

PERCIVAL TO JULIA.

A rich heiress—A husband's love—A worthless woman—An intrigue discovered—Plan for detecting the parties—Love unknown to the foolish and abandoned—Effusions of pure love.

London.

My lovely Julia knows the heart of her Edward to be hers, we naturally look with partiality on what belongs to us, and to love as we love, Julia, is the highest degree of mortal bliss.

Miss Coverley's letter gave me much pleasure. Nature has endowed her with uncommon faculties; and if she makes a right use of them, she will be worthy of my Julia's friendship. Her youth is in her favour, but I fear the weak intellect and inconsistencies of her aunt, Lady Duberley, under whose protection she is making her entrance into the world, will be attended with prejudicial consequences to her mind.

The part my father took in the arrangement of her family affairs first gained me her notice, and my sentiments seem to have secured me her good opinion: not indeed from their sympathy, but from the manner in which I have opposed them to hers. She has formed wrong but plausible notions on some of the most important subjects, which the ridiculous examples before her, and the characters of the fops of her acquaintance, have rendered so strong that I fear her conduct will be tinctured by them.

She is now eighteen, and will be mistress of a large fortune; the death of her brother under age, leaving her sole heiress to three fine estates. Of course she is surrounded by admirers; and when I last saw her, I listened to her desire of corresponding

with me, without much expecting to hear from her. It is now some time ago, and I was rather surprised on receiving her letter. I acknowledge it by the same post that conveys this to the mistress of my heart. I think of you, Julia, with as much ardour as when you first taught me the passion at Bevil-lodge; if possible, with more: the charms of my wife are at least as transcendent as were those of my mistress; and I am a fortunate instance against the observation, that there is more enjoyment in the prospect than in the attainment of our wishes. Your unfashionable husband is your lover, and will continue to be your lover, while there exists in his bosom a spark to which the name of love belongs. There is a delight in this beyond all that fashion or the world can offer. Oh! my dear Julia! when I look round me and view the present state of what is called love, the caprices of women and the follies of men, I congratulate myself, and cannot bless heaven too much for having thrown me into your arms.

My poor friend Stormont! he has thrown away his heart upon a worthless thing. Your judgment was but too accurate, Julia: his wife is faithless; she has poisoned the source of joy. The peace of my friend's mind is too deeply wounded to be easily restored. I found him in a state verging on distraction. When I arrived, he was in his library, whither I immediately went: he was pacing the floor with agitated steps, and as I entered flew towards me. He trembled and would have sunk to the ground, had I not supported him to the sopha. "Oh! "Percival," said he, "my existence is become "burdensome to me: I wish not to live longer." I pressed his hand, and urged him by all the arguments of friendship and philosophy to moderate his grief; assuring him at the same time that I had

flown, on receiving his letter, to participate whatever affliction had befallen him, and to console him to the utmost of my power.

He looked at me some moments without speaking; then heaved a deep sigh, and said it was a case that did not admit of consolation: "But," continued he, "you can counsel me, and you shall assist me in "acting, if when I have told you the injury I have "received, you do not despise me for feeling more "sorrow than indignation." He then put a note into my hand, desiring me to read his disgrace, for he could not give the first utterance to it. It was more than indignation that arose in my bosom on finding that the paper contained an assignation of infamy. My blood ran cold: I traversed the room with as much agitation as he had done, and it was a considerable time before I recovered myself sufficiently to consult with him upon the steps that were to be taken. The note was anonymous; but the character in which it was written was too clearly that of Arabella Stormont; the superscription was less intelligible, consisting only of these words, "*To the idol of my heart*," enclosed in a cover to P. C. Esq. Though convinced myself of the folly of his wife, and though that conviction was completely manifested by the agitation I had discovered, I could not help dissuading him from suspecting it. "Come, "come," said I, "Stormont, there wants proof of "this; this vile note is neither signed nor address-"ed: the bosom of my friend shall not be wounded "by the sting of suspicion."—"Percival," replied he, "it is too surely true." "If so surely true," said I, "on whom does your suspicion fall?"—"It impli-"cates a name I cannot mention: even your friend-"ship shall excuse me for the present. It is yet un-"proved: but of how little importance is a name!

" Whatever it be, my happiness is gone, my life is " rendered bitter. Oh! Arabella! Arabella! you " have pierced the only heart that can be true to you." " A shower of tears now came to his relief, and restored to him in some degree the power of conversing.

Humphry, his valet, who is the admirer of Mrs. Stormont's waiting-woman, has been long uncommonly attached to him, and the observations he made on his lady's conduct with the petty confidences reposed in him by Abigail, gave him reason to suspect that they were in a combination against the honour of his master. Some days ago he opened his honest mind to Stormont, who immediately wrote for me. It was but a few minutes before I arrived that the note I have mentioned was brought to him by Humphry. The waiting-woman, disappointed in finding her usual ambassador the street porter, had ventured to solicit the confederacy of her sweetheart, who, equally disgusted at the employment of Susan and the treachery of his lady, made no scruple of depositing the billet on his master's table, rather than on the bar to which it was directed. It contained nothing less than an appointment to meet to-morrow at Ranelagh masquerade, in particular dresses, and thence to proceed to a place named by the gentleman.

Upon these circumstantial proofs, how to act was the question. Moved as Stormont had been, he had given his wife no reason to suspect a discovery of her infidelity, and it was resolved between us, that her conviction should be so palpable as to admit of no palliation. We carefully enclosed the assignation in a cover like the original, imitating the writing, and dispatching it by Humphry, with a strict injunction of bringing the answer himself.

It happened that the gallant was with some com-

pany in the house, and sent an immediate reply. The wafer was still moist; opening it with caution, we found this billet also anonymous, and the handwriting evidently disguised: but being masters of the dresses fixed upon, detection is inevitable. The hour appointed in the note was eleven, which was easily altered to ten. This was done that the lady might be at the place an hour before the gentleman, to give Stormont an opportunity of going off with his wife in the disguise of her gallant. In the meantime, he complains of indisposition to conceal his agitation, and keeps my arrival unknown, lest my appearance should obstruct our plan.

This, Julia, is the actual state of my poor friend. How my heart bleeds for him! how it despises the worthless Arabella! I cannot foresee the result of to-morrow's events. What will he do? He can never more esteem her. Weak, foolish woman! Can he love her? impossible. All that she can now inspire must fall infinitely short of love; of that delightful passion, Julia, in which the delicacy of the mind disparages not the raptures of the heart, in which judgment ratifies feeling, and to which therefore neither the foolish nor the abandoned can aspire. Oh! Love! talked of by all, known to few, thou art indeed the bliss of life! and it is because thou art so seldom found, that the lot of man is miserable. Is there a situation in society, a corner on the globe that the smiles of my Julia would not render a paradise? The secret of happiness is in my possession. I will tell it to my friends; I will tell it to the world; I will cry out to them; "Seek it in love."

Adieu! Write to me. Repeat the never cloying repetition of, "I love you," and receive it from me: I love you, Julia, to adoration. Impart this letter to Towers: to such a friend all that passes in my mind

is open; he is, as it were, our own hearts. To have a wife and a friend deserving and enjoying such boundless confidence, is the summit of mortal felicity.

LETTER XXI.

JULIA TO PERCIVAL.

An idea of what are frequently called love-matches—Syllogisms —The ladies proved logically entitled to adoration.

How delightful are your letters! how delightful, Edward, is every thing you say or do to my heart! Yes, I love you; the Bevil-lodge repetition is as ardent as on the day the words first came from my lips, and comes now with as much pleasure from my pen as it did then from my tongue: "I esteem, I "admire, and love you, Edward." I showed your letter to Towers, and he is almost as happy as myself at the unbounded love and confidence of our hearts. How good, how amiable he is!

We grieve together for Mr. Stormont, yet blame him for the precipitation with which he attached himself to Arabella. She was handsome enough to excite admiration, which he mistook for love. How many matches, that are called love-matches, are made the same way! A few glances from fine eyes, looks of delight, some flattering dialogues, and mutual pressures of the hand, set the blood in motion, the deluded pair call it love, and rush headlong into matrimony. I fear this was your friend's case. He persuaded himself that he loved her, without sounding her understanding, or investigating her disposition. The result is such as might have been fore-

seen. Towers says his grief will not be lasting, and I should hope so; as the unworthiness of the object must surely produce a change in his sentiments. Let me beseech you, then, my dear Edward, to moderate your own feelings, and not to be unnecessarily unhappy. Be careful of the part you take in the affair, for my heart sinks under the apprehension of your involving yourself in a quarrel, and do not delay writing to me.

Lord Chopstone called as I finished reading your letter to Towers, who had picked a quarrel with the expression of your *loving me to adoration*, and as soon as his Lordship was seated, smiled and asked him, whether it was not sacrilege to *adore* a woman? "To be able to draw just conclusions," replied he, "it is requisite to set out by defining our terms. If, "by adoring, we understand the sacred worship we "are taught to pay to the Creator; it would be "clearly a sacrilege to transfer it to a creature. "But if, by adoring, we are to understand that "homage paid to whatever is of a divine nature, I "undertake to prove, that to adore a woman is not "sacrilege; as thus—a beautiful woman is a divinity; "a divinity ought to be adored; therefore a beauti-"ful woman ought to be adored; and the sacrilege "is in withholding, not in paying adoration. By "the way, Mr. Towers, a poet is the last person I "should suspect of starting the doubt."—"The "ladies are much obliged to your logic, my Lord," said Towers; "and you have now only to prove "them divinities, to establish your inference; for "your Lordship begged the question."—"Was it "ever doubted that a beautiful woman was divine?" cried he; then addressing himself to me, "Is it not, "Madam, a settled point?"—"Oh! my Lord," said I, "I am thoroughly convinced of it, but I have "not powers to convince my friend; pray make the

" trial."—" What can we reason but from what " we know?" argued his Lordship: " divinity can " only be known by its effects. It is the property " of divine power to spread joy and happiness, to " inspire the love of excellence and of virtue"—— " Enough, my Lord," cried Towers, interrupting his syllogism; " the woman who spreads joy and " happiness at the same time that she inspires the " love of excellence and the love of virtue, shall be " a divinity; and so, Julia, thou art a divinity." Thus, Edward, are we logically entitled by Lord Chopstone to adore each other. But after he was gone, Towers said, that, notwithstanding his Lordship's elocution, he had never liked the equivocation of sacred words; though he thought that as lovers were not to be prevented from adoring their mistresses, marriage ought not to weaken the language of love. If happiness, if the incitement to love and to virtue be a title to adoration, how fully is my Edward possessed of that of his

JULIA.

P. S. Caroline sends you her love. I observe that Lord Chopstone is more and more attentive to her. I assure you I think a declaration of love very near at hand.

LETTER XXII.

PERCIVAL TO PHILIP TOWERS.

Arabella detected: where, and with whom—A very uncommon elopement—An infatuated husband.

Dear Towers,

WHAT a cruel and mortifying scene have I experienced! I can scarcely relate it to you, and certainly cannot to Julia, to whom I meant to write the sequel of Arabella's dishonour, without requesting you to prepare her for a shock that had nearly overpowered myself. Talk to Julia, my dear friend, before you communicate to her the contents of this letter, and suffer her not to feel too severely the corruption of heart I was destined to discover.

You have read the last letter I wrote to Julia; consider this therefore as a continuance of Stormont's unhappy story, in which I am still more concerned than I could possibly have imagined. My friend's passion for Arabella is of that sort which is maintained by personal charms alone; it was the error of his marriage, and the only point in which I have ever known his good sense fail him. The gaiety of their lives, and that kind of rivalry which the admiration of beaux raises up to some husbands, have kept his passion in full vigour, and I believe he would sooner die at present than lose her. Instead of receiving the idea my indignation suggested of divorce, he shuddered at it; talked of the delirium of a life of gaiety, of hope in retirement and reflection, and said, that to snatch her from destruction was not only a duty but would be the renovation of his happiness.

I pitied his weakness without arguing against it;

for, though I felt for the dishonour that must inevitably be the consequence of her conduct, I did not think myself at liberty to oppose the hope of saving her. I therefore concurred in the following scheme: that Stormont should assume the disguise of the gallant, and go off with his wife in a hired carriage, the driver of which should have directions to proceed quickly towards Hounslow, whence she should be carried in post-chaises to their country house; that I should accompany my friend to Ranelagh in a domino, and after seeing him off, should watch for and detect the disappointed gentleman.

We entered the rotunda at a little before ten, Stormont with a black domino over his disguise, and as we were making the second round, we perceived our mask enter. At the sight, my poor friend was so agitated that he could scarcely support himself; and I was obliged to accompany him to dispose of his domino. He soon, however, recovered his spirits, and returned singly to the place of appointment, whither I followed him at a little distance, and passing near enough to hear him address the mask in a feigned voice, saw them go off together.

Undisposed for pleasure, blind and deaf to the amusement of the place, I had nearly an hour left me for solitary meditation on the corruption of the heart and the folly of resigning real bliss for the momentary phantoms of a heated imagination. I withdrew to a box, and, abstracting myself from the bustling fopperies of the scene, became absorbed in tracing the causes of the frequency of the iniquitous and destructive gallantries of the age. But, my dear friend, the reflections that then passed in my mind are at present overpowered by the sensations that occupy my breast. It was past eleven before I was awakened from my reverie by the very person

I was waiting for. He entered the box hastily, and seating himself, uttered an exclamation in a voice familiar to my ear. At the sight of his dress, I felt my indignation rise, but how shall I make you sensible of my agitation when, on his removing his mask to wipe his forehead, I discovered—Oh! Towers!—the dishonourer of my friend's wife proves to be—I can scarcely suffer my pen to trace the name of—Charles.

Confounded at a discovery so disgraceful to my family, as well as injurious to my friend, I deliberated whether to make myself known and upbraid him, or to leave him in ignorance of his detection. A moment's consideration satisfied me that the latter would be better, as there was a greater probability of stifling all report by caution, than by passion: but that he might remember my having been in the box with him, I said to him as I left him; "This is a "villanous world we live in, Sir." I then made my retreat, disgusted and unhappy; and it was not till I had meditated some time on my Julia and yourself, that I recovered the serenity of my mind. I went to Stormont's house, in order to account to the servants for the sudden departure of their master, but did not find them much surprised, as they had been accustomed to unaccountable occurrences.

My heart bends homeward; I shall now soon leave town, but mean to wait for a letter from Stormont. How he can reconcile his passion with the infidelity of its object, I know not; but while he retains my affection and pity, I confess, I feel some diminution of my esteem, when I consider him as contented to be the dupe of a vicious woman: this is indeed infatuation, but not love. Our friendship began at Oxford, where I had an opportunity of seeing many virtues in him, and a prevalence of

good humour, which, joined to a similarity of taste in the pursuit of our studies, attached me very strongly to him, and I have ever since loved him.

Lord Digby is not in town. Thomas left your packet at his house. Adieu, my dear Towers, till I find you at the Elms. We will talk over the subject of this letter. I am inclined to hope for Charles that this folly did not originate with him, and that he cannot have been guilty of the diabolical crime of seduction.

LETTER XXIII.

LORD DIGBY TO PHILIP TOWERS.

Reflections in the early part of the French revolution—Passengers in a Brighton packet—A little Jew—Dignity of human nature—Education—A young Frenchman and an old one—An Italian and an Englishman form a petty project on them, which is overheard by Lord Digby—Monsieur de St. Valeri.

Dear Towers,

Brighton.

I FIND myself deep in arrears to you for the pleasure I have received from the Bevil-lodge packet, and your own letters. I did not foresee such a harvest of gratification from my remarks on the sentimental turn of Percival, and congratulate myself on my unexpected acquisition. I am satisfied that your friend is an amiable man. His passion for Julia, his conduct at the lodge, his letters, are all nature, and nature delightfully refined. Among the pleasures afforded me by your packet, your honourable matchmaking was not the least; and when it can be so done, it is not merely gratification, it is virtue.

Nor am I less delighted at the ardour of a passion unattended with difficulties, the usual incentives to the raptures of love. Still I am of opinion that large professions are generally the veils of a corrupt heart, and that your friend Edward would be the better in possessing some of his brother's *nonchalance* of character. In Edward there may be no deceit: in Charles, not only there is no deceit, but there is no appearance of it; *nous verrons*.

I have been across the channel to look at the national cockades, and to see what alterations the revolution has made in the faces of the French. Novelty has the highest charms for a Frenchman, and mirth seems innate to him. They are all alive, singing, dancing, and crowding to every public place: but this gaiety is not the effect of the revolution; it is the gift of nature to the French nerves, and appeared equally vivacious on the Boulevards of Paris under the very walls of the Bastile in the most despotic times. They now give a range to politics unknown to them before, and talk of government with that freedom which is the birth-right of men, and of which no government can deprive them. Could the affairs of the nation even now be conducted on principle and with energy, every thing might be hoped in its favour: but with all the improvements in science of the eighteenth century, the passions of man remain what they were. These are afloat, and Heaven knows what the consequences to France may be. The great are intriguing for a full restoration of their powers and franchises; ambitious men of the lower order are bustling to raise themselves; and the people at large have their spirits in an agitation that is not likely to subside before it has been thrown by some artful characters into a whirlwind that may spread destruction far and wide.

I have been but a little way into Normandy, and under a feigned name. You know my propensity to drop my title in travelling, and, as usual, I have in this little excursion found the deficiencies of parade infinitely more than compensated by the profits of familiar intercourse and inquiry. In the passage back I met with some oddities. As the packet was to sail from Dieppe by the night-tide, I went on board, and got into bed. In the morning I was awakened by the voice of a person talking very familiarly with the steward, and sporting a great deal of that kind of wit which consists in speaking plainly of whatever delicacy prompts a real gentleman to avoid or conceal. What pleasure any one can find in using vulgar phrases, or in making dirty and indelicate allusions, is incomprehensible to me. This person I found to be Captain Falton, who took care that I should not long remain ignorant that he was Lord ——'s nephew. From his conversation, I found that there were two French gentlemen in the stern cabin, who, to use the Captain's own expression, had been in a *hell of a funk* all the time the vessel lay in the harbour, and while she was getting under weigh. Besides these, there were four other passengers; an Italian, with two Englishmen his friends, and a little German Jew. The last was a boy of fourteen years old, to whom the Captain of the packet gave a passage through charity. Without a sixpence in his pocket, he had left Upper Germany, and made his way to Paris, whence some of his nation had forwarded him to Dieppe. He said he had not a farthing; but he did not care for that, for there were some very good Jews at Brighton, who would assist him in getting to town, where he could get his own *livings* by selling lemons about the streets. What a lot!

Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's.

Alas! poor human nature! how many of thy children know not the comforts that the beasts enjoy! If eating, drinking, and a covering to defend her from the cold, be all that nature needs, then indeed is the life of man cheap, and those seemed to be all this little Israelite cared for. Thoughtless and happy, in what does he differ from that spaniel basking in the sun? Where is the dignity of man? In what does it consist? "His thoughts are unlimited; he carries his researches into the most distant "regions of the globe, to the planets and heavenly "bodies. He looks back to consider the origin of "things; he casts his eyes forward to see the influence of his actions upon posterity, and the "judgments which will be formed of his character "a thousand years hence: he traces causes and effects to great lengths and intricacy; extracts general principles from particular appearances; improves upon his discoveries, corrects his mistakes, "and makes his very errors profitable." See my little wanderer what a difference between you and the spaniel, and how exalted a notion I am bound to entertain of you in the comparison: so in selling your lemons hold your head high; for, although you are as careless, as thoughtless, and as happy, perhaps, as the dog; though you have never thought of your origin so far back as your grandfather, nor looked into futurity beyond crying your lemons in London; although you reason no farther than your immediate wants, yet have you a capacity for wonderful things. Oh! Education! moulder of the mind! it is thou that drawest forth the genius of man, and now and then affordest a bright example of that dignity which we see so generally degraded,

so crushed beneath ignorance and the pervading influence of his inferior nature, so seemingly unworthy of immortality! How far the greater part of our species are born to lead nearly an animal life! Wholly engaged in providing, like the bee, a store for their wants, they eat, they drink, they make clothes, and build houses, they propagate and die, ignorant of the very form of the earth on which they have lived for years! Perhaps hereafter—yes hereafter—the diamond, although it remain for ages in the mine, possesses there an inherent brilliancy; the miner removes it from its dark abode to a purer realm, and the workman discharges the dull coat that obstructs its lustre. It is the good fortune of some genius, and for the good of the world, to be here considerably disencumbered by education of the crust that deadens its brilliancy; the mass remains to be polished: if the gem be good in itself, its lying in the rough state will not injure it; remove it to the workman's when you will, its brilliancy may be drawn forth. Time is short, and, in relation to eternity, education is, perhaps, not entitled to that value we are inclined to grant it; for, while we admire the ease, the grace, the dignity it gives to genius, we cannot forget to how few it is allotted here. Instruction may form a duty, may be a means of bliss among spirits; the most uneducated may rapidly shine forth; knowledge, and the most amiable qualities, may adorn the illiterate; even idiotism and madness forfeit not the claims of the soul to immortal brightness; since its surrounding opacity shall at last yield to the polisher. Go then, my little Jew, and sell your lemons, but take care never to let the devil tempt you to pick pockets at Drury Lane or Covent Garden.

Excuse the rhapsody, Towers, and return with me to the packet. When we had got to sea I went

above, and became acquainted with my fellow-passengers. On deck, I found the young Frenchman who was very well dressed *à l'Angloise*. He was a very handsome lively fellow, entered willingly into conversation, and discovered no fears; but was perfectly silent about his own situation and his friend's, who now made his appearance, and a grotesque one it was. An elderly man, inclined to corpulency, in an old fashioned French coat that hung loosely on him; a waistcoat with flaps hanging down to his knees, the pockets of which were stuffed so full as to stick out awkwardly like cushions; a pair of black calamanco breeches flapped about his thighs: his wig was a grey bob so short behind as to leave the nape of his neck entirely exposed, looking like two blown bladders, and his beard was at least a week old. He soon made amends for the young man's reserve, and Captain Falton having taken an early occasion to acquaint him that he was the nephew of an Earl, the old man unbosomed himself in return. "I travel," said he, "under the name "of Du Barré, but my name is ***. I am of the "order of the nobility, my fortune is considerable; "I was president of ——, and have been honoured "with the *Cordon Bleu*. I have fled, because I did "not think myself safe in the reach of a mob by "whom I was, among others, unjustly charged with "engrossing corn. Thus, at the age of sixty, you "see me leaving my house, my wife, my connec-"tions, and travelling in disguise with one friend, "who has kindly accompanied me, to cross the sea, "and seek safety in your country."

The old man's fears were justified by the outrages that had been committed at the beginning; but at this time, I believe, he might have remained at home in security: it is, however, a truth that men become generally more solicitous to preserve life as

they approach the end of it. Captain Falton observed, that he saw from the first, a certain air that bespoke his rank, and that nothing was easier to men of fashion than to discover through all disguise the native dignity of men of superior birth. Not being a man of fashion, I was not so sharp-sighted; the Chevalier appeared to be a genteel young man, but Monsieur le President, far from impressing me with any idea of dignity, put me in mind of an odd-looking Jew I have seen walking in the streets of London, covered with bundles of rags. He had never been at sea in his life, and I found he was alarmed to an extreme degree at the heeling of the vessel, although he took pains to assure us that the trembling of his hands did not proceed from any apprehensions of danger, as he understood from the principles of mechanics that the boat could not easily overset. He embraced both Captain Falton and myself several times, calling us, by turns, Milord, Monseigneur, Mon cher Milord.

Our passage was a very long one: at noon we were still in sight of the French coast. My head and stomach being a little disordered by the swell of the water, I went into a bed in the cabin, where I remained some time quiet, and was entertained by a conversation between the Italian and one of his English friends. The Italian talked English and French equally fluently, and had, as I found, been taking his share of confidence from the old President. The Englishman began the conversation by wishing that they had brought something on board to eat, for he was *damnably* hungry. The Italian comforted him by saying he had been making friends with the two Frenchmen, who had got an abundant provision of veal, turkey, tongues, and wine. "I know," said he, "they will ask me to "eat with them, and then I'll introduce you."—

"Zounds, we are in luck," cried the Englishman. "Then," continued the Italian, "as neither of "them can speak English, I'll worm myself into "their favour, and offer to travel to London with "them to oblige them: they can't do less than pay "expences, and when we get to town they may "perhaps turn to some account."—"So they may," said the Englishman. Thus were these two politicians calculating upon the President and Chevalier, when I undrew my curtain, and the Italian's eye caught mine. He instinctively asked if I had been asleep. I said I was more sick than sleepy. He seemed abashed at finding me privy to his conversation, and such was the effect it had, that he relinquished his plan of attack upon the Frenchmen, he and his companions dining upon some eggs which they begged of the steward, and when we landed here, instead of obliging the President with their company, the party slipped off, defraying their journey with their passage-money, which they forgot to pay to the master of the packet.

I took care of Monsieur Du Barré, and the Chevalier de St. Valeri, for that is the name of his young friend, and finding a gentleman of my acquaintance going to town, I consigned them to his care. *Ah! comme les Anglois sont bons, polis, et bienfaisants!* said Monsieur Du Barré, who without knowing any thing of me, was constantly addressing me, *Mon cher Milord;* on which I took occasion to tell him that however Englishmen respected rank as the mark of merit and honour, it was perfectly ridiculous to assume it without pretensions; that *Sir* was as applicable to his Majesty himself as to every gentleman, and that it was no offence not to apply titles where we were not certain of their being due. He begged pardon, assuring me he had done so in the hope of pleasing.

There is something very penetrating in St. Valeri's countenance, and elegant in his manners: I should like to meet him again, and intend finding him out in town.

I meet a number of fresh faces here; among others that foolish old woman Lady Duberley, with her niece, who turns out not only a beauty, but a singular character, possessing masculine sense, and a mode of thinking that alarms the serious of her sex, and strengthens the hoping vigilance of the envious, and of the tribe of slander. She is worthy of observation, for which reason I will cultivate the acquaintance of her aunt. More hereafter; at present I am inclined to rest. Adieu!

Yours ever,

DIGBY.

LETTER XXIV.

MISS COVERLEY TO PERCIVAL.

A singular and dangerous turn of mind.

You have given me infinite pleasure by consenting to a correspondence from which I expect so much real satisfaction and advantage. Of flattery I cannot be guilty; for I do not confound the genuine effusions of sincere praise with that contemptible jargon so often used in order to draw the same from others. I am too proud to stoop to it: therefore do not let the warmth of my expressions, which I cannot curb, cause you to suspect my sincerity.

My mind is full of enthusiasm; and I wonder when you say that there is more to be feared from my head than from my heart. Give me leave to differ from you: the ardour of the latter may lead

me into errors, which I must trust to the former to rectify. I confess indeed that I often approve of impulses, of sentiments, and of opinions, that I find not justified by my aunt or by general custom. I shall have much to say to you on this score, and if I sometimes take flights not altogether consistent with the established formalities of the world, you must not be offended with me. I am conscious of being singular; and Heaven knows I suffer daily for my singularity. There are some, of whose good opinion I am ambitious, but for the generality of the world I care little. Finding among them so few whose sentiments and feelings correspond with my own, the acquisition of a friend like you is a treasure to me. Is it not natural to seek for those we think worthy of our esteem and affection? and for a mind that has formed its ideas apart from the multitude to catch at those qualities it admires, and which it so rarely meets? For this reason, and for this *reason only*, have I offered you my friendship, and requested yours in return. Your mind bears more the stamp of real worth than any that has ever fallen within my observation. Shall I say forgive me? No; for again remember I do not flatter, while I say what I think and feel.

I am now, as it is termed, entering the world; and a fine entrance I make of it. It is a pretty broad passage, and yet it is so crowded with the votaries of curiosity, scandal, self-interest, and vanity, that I shall advance with difficulty, if I do at all, into the midst of it. I am surrounded by admirers of my person, and admirers of my fortune, and at the same time by declared enemies to the singularities of my temper and the whimsies of my brain. To conduct me through this maze, I have a well meaning but weak relation, frivolous and vain, whose affections, if affections they may be

called, are rooted prejudices, and whose understanding is frittered away by parade and trifles. A woman who has passed her whole life in a servile pursuit of the follies created by fashion, and whose feelings therefore the independence of my spirit cannot fail to outrage; in short, my Right Honourable aunt, Lady Duberley; who is meaning to marry me high among the Peers of the realm, while I am meditating a seclusion from the impertinences and inconsistencies of mankind, and taking views of happiness through the optics of nature and of reason. I fear these views are not to be realized in the present state of society; and situated as I am, I doubt no great portion of bliss will fall to my lot. To enjoy the confidence of a mind like yours will indeed make me some amends, and to possess an interest in your bosom will console me for other deficiencies; continue then, my dear Mr. Percival, your friendship to me: write to me, advise me, give me your opinions, and feel interested about me. Adieu.

LETTER XXV.

PERCIVAL TO MISS COVERLEY.

The pride of intellect to be dreaded.

London.

THE enthusiasm your heart is endowed with, my dear Miss Coverley, is an earnest of its goodness, nor is it to be feared while you have an understanding that can and will guide it. We do not differ so much as you imagine, in the opinion I expressed in regard to your heart and your head. You say the

ardour of the former may lead you into errors: turn the phrase, and say that your heart may be led into error, and there is nothing more clear than that the best heart at your age is the most likely to be deceived. Unsuspecting, it will take pleasing impressions from fair appearances, and it is with regret we learn, as we advance in life, that the virtues of innocence and the enthusiasm of youth lead but too often to worldly error. I still think it is your head you have to fear, by which I mean that the turn of thought and of taste you discover is dangerous to happiness. Shall I say it more plainly? It is the pride of intellect you have to guard against.

Your friendship and your desire of possessing mine are both flattering and agreeable; and I shall esteem it one of the most delightful offices of my life to conduce to your attainment of what I think you so highly deserve, and assist you in a search the most important to every intellectual being. In the meantime do not think it a phantom, or unattainable by you. Thousands of beings of your age, in various parts of the globe, are now starting with you in pursuit of happiness; thousands I believe will attain it with less difficulty than you, but let me comfort you with this reflection, that the difficulty will heighten the enjoyment, and that your happiness, when fixed, will be a thousand times more exquisite than all the insipid felicity that can possibly arise from the customary delights of the world.

I admire your account of your passage into society. It is, however, what was to be expected: but it is something singular to find a young woman looking round her with the scrutinizing eyes of a philosopher; and, instead of yielding her mind to the attractions of gaiety and of ambition, meditating a seclusion from the impertinences of the world.

LETTER XXVI.

PERCIVAL TO JULIA.

Anxiety for a brother.

My dearest Julia,

I KNOW what you have suffered from Towers's communication of my last letter. It will not, however, leave a painful impression for any great duration: your discriminating mind very early taught you that Arabella Stormont was not one of those characters whose names you could inscribe under the title of friendship; and as for Charles's part in the scene, let us, from the levity of her mind, hope that if his conduct be not altogether excusable, it may admit of considerable extenuation.

It is with these reflections that I have been endeavouring all the morning to subdue the violence of my first emotions, and to prepare myself for a happy meeting with my Julia. I shall remain in town no longer than to receive Stormont's account of his extraordinary elopement, which I expect tomorrow. In the meantime I am in doubt whether to see Charles or not; whether to conceal my knowledge of his licentiousness for the present, or to expostulate with him upon it. I am convinced that his heart is naturally good; I could cite a thousand instances in proof of it, and some worthy of the greatest admiration: but his companions! the habits they have entailed upon him!—alas! he would perhaps only ridicule the precise and unfashionable style of his brother's sentiments, and I should leave town ruffled and made unhappy by his. Will it not be better that I should see my Julia first? It will; and I will write to him from the Elms. Would to

heaven I could disengage him from the pursuits for which he has acquired a taste from his early introduction among a set of men who call themselves choice spirits; that is to say, men who defy reflection, and think morality a sin. He is far superior to those men; but, misled by the gaiety of his heart, and the original justness of his intentions, he has so given himself up to the stream, that I fear, before he makes an effort to stem it, he will be lost.

Towers is mistaken with respect to the duration of Stormont's grief. His passion is for Arabella's person, and is deep-rooted: her mind is tainted, her virtue gone; but her personal charms remain unchanged; and I should not be surprised if her desertion of him should have the most fatal effects upon his mind.

I admire Lord Chopstone's logical defence of female adoration! What a ridiculous turn of mind is it, to be for ever insisting on formal demonstration! A suggestion, a sentiment from Towers, carries more weight than all his Lordship's deductions. He is right, Julia: words appropriated to our relation with the Deity are injured by the best and purest applications of them to the creatures of his hand. Let Love be our word, my Julia. What sweeter sound can touch the ear! what sooner vibrate to the heart! I long to be at home—

The arrow that upward has cleft thro' the air
Returns with full force, for no rest finds it there:
So from thee my fond heart never yet cou'd find rest,
But, attracted, speeds back to its home in thy breast.

EDWARD.

LETTER XXVII.

MISS COVERLEY TO PERCIVAL.

Early discontent with life—A romantic girl—A favour requested.

You think me in danger of becoming an unhappy being from my turn of thought and taste. Young as I am, I feel the truth of your observation. I differ from those I converse with: they mortify and disappoint me. I draw back with disgust; I raise wonder, and perhaps hatred also. Sometimes my reserve is construed into pride and affectation. When I am talkative, my ideas are laughed at as inconsistent with the opinions of the world; my conduct and character are not understood; and I am stigmatized with being romantic, that is, ridiculous. What am I to do? Either I must give up the world, or my own faculties. Am I born to say yes, certainly, and that's right, when my conviction impels me to say no, I doubt, and that's wrong? Am I to be a slave to what I despise? Oh! my friend, I already perceive how unfit I am for life, as it has been cooked up by pedants and old maids: how little calculated to be led in strings by Lady Duberley!

No, I am debating whether I shall continue to run the gantlet of fools till I am one and twenty, then retire to a villa on one of my estates, and endeavour to allure a few congenial spirits around it; or ————heavens! what am I going to say? is not all this romantic? and do I not risk the loss of your opinion too by such sentiments? Tell me freely your thoughts, but do not drop your own noble and liberal ideas, to adopt the stale precepts of an unnatural world. Treat me as a friend, of whose under-

standing you have an opinion, not as a child to whom you would impart some spelling-book rules. Do this, and I will open my mind, and discuss my opinions very freely in our correspondence. In the meantime I will conclude this letter with begging a favour of you. You have heard that before I left Paris, I was suspected of having formed an attachment to a young Frenchman of the name of St. Valeri. I cannot myself determine whether the suspicion was well founded or not. He possessed a beauty of countenance, and a degree of grace that made a great impression on me; and the attention I paid him was construed into a passion. He was well connected, but had an unfortunate turn for gambling, by which I believe he had ruined his fortune. I received abundance of warning against him, and I am persuaded it was on his account that I was removed to London for the rest of my education. My French maid Henriette, whom I brought from Paris with me, is very positive that she saw him land here from one of the packets. I feel a great desire to know where he is, and what has brought him over. I have no channel of inquiry; and as you and your friends have many Parisian acquaintance, you will confer a great favour on me if you will find him out. I hope you will not think that I ask an improper thing: it is the high opinion I have both of your understanding and your heart, which prompts me to take this liberty with you. Write soon.

LETTER XXVIII.

PERCIVAL TO MISS COVERLEY.

Romance—Patience and pliability recommended to a young female philosopher—Some advice respecting marriage.

Your letters interest me more and more. I hasten to answer your last. There is a prodigious number of little creatures that are thrown indifferently on the surface of life, to swim down the channel of time, and be lost in the ocean of eternity. These ever mock the exertions of beings whom Nature has proportioned to her work, who dive deep to search the bottom of the stream for jewels, and float not with that happy ease that seems to attend the multitude. It is no wonder that to these self-constituted judges of sentiment and conduct the romantic and the ridiculous should be synonimous, though on the contrary to be romantic should mean to be all that is great and good. The word you know is derived from the Romans, whose history is replete with instances of bravery, generosity, self-denial, and in short of every species of magnanimity and virtue. When the Romans became corrupt, declined, and at last ceased entirely to be a nation, the glorious reality of heroism, and the brilliant habits of virtue were lost: but the admiration of it was not easily extinguished, and the world was overwhelmed with a species of writing in which the Roman virtues were displayed under fictitious characters, with improbable and impossible events, and the term romance was given to that kind of composition. Romance being fiction, romantic of course was made to imply a pretension to something ideal, something not consonant to the actual situation of human beings. It is in this sense that the

word is now usually taken, though, as I have shown you, it ought to imply all that incites our virtues or elevates our nature. I cannot then but rejoice to find you so stigmatized. According to our acceptation of the word, be as romantic as you please, for it is to be noble.

Still, it is a character I would not have you waste upon fools and the votaries of fashion, with whose modes, while you live among them, you will find some degree of conformity necessary, for the sake of peace. You cannot hope that any pretensions to philosophy in a young woman can be well received by the world. It is the wise only who approve the love of wisdom; therefore you are not to be disappointed and vexed that your sentiments are little understood. You must arm yourself with patience for an intercourse with general society, and with a certain pliability of manners, which on common occasions is amiable. Politeness conciliates, and where it clashes not with virtue, we owe it to all we meet. A noble mind will ever think and act according to the dictates of its reason, but is not degraded in assimilating conversation to the characters it falls in with; and as there are so many unimportant occurrences in the course of life, it would not be wise to cast away altogether the minuter pleasures that arise from superficial concessions.

I am a great stickler for sincerity, but I preach thus to you, because I perceive it to be one of the rocks that lie in your passage. Alas! our very virtues may lead us into error without a skilful pilot at the helm. From your love of sincerity, from your detestation of hypocrisy, you cannot adapt your conversation to thoughts beneath your own; and by starting topics above the reach, or repugnant to the feelings of the crowd, you are in danger of making a host of enemies. You may as well think

of feeding horses with jellies and pine-apples, as of feasting some spirits with philosophy; the repast would be equally unsuitable. Yield then, my dear Miss Coverley, to trifle with the trifling, if your connections in life throw them in your way; but for rational investigation, and similarity of thought, have recourse to the bosom of friendship. Friendship! alas! it is difficult to find. It is doubly difficult to you; but find it you must; for I am persuaded you cannot be happy without it; and that too in a degree still beyond what ours can possibly arise to, where it mingles with love; such as completes the bliss of your friend and his Julia. But the happiness of your whole life depending upon it, I beseech you to tread with caution the ground that leads to marriage.

I know too little of the Chevalier de St. Valeri to form a judgment of him: what I have heard from yourself and others makes me tremble for you. I understand the passions too well not to foresee the consequence of your meeting him; and while I admire the candour of your doubt respecting the suspicion of an attachment, I advise you to examine your heart well. If on examination you frankly tell me that there is a passion lurking there, I will make it my business to form an acquaintance with the object of it, I will search his heart, I will start a plan to probe the value of his mind and the nature of his attachment to you, and if the result be such as to open a prospect of happiness, I will undertake any thing to accomplish it. I am so thoroughly satisfied that a well judged marriage is the happiest state of life, that I am always inclined to promote it. I have a friend who assisted to hasten my happiness, and I shall be highly delighted in assisting to accomplish yours. On the other hand, I have lately had a sad proof of the curse attending incon-

siderate matches, and from such a lot I shall be glad to guard you. As you find I do not treat you like a child, but that I have a high opinion of your understanding, I expect your confidence with freedom and sincerity.—Adieu.

LETTER XXIX.

FREDERICK STORMONT TO PERCIVAL.

Sequel of a husband's elopement with his wife—The agitation of a fond injured man.

Dear Percival,

I SCARCELY can prevail upon myself to write to you. The situation into which I am thrown by Arabella's weakness is so unexpected, that my thoughts and actions are the results of impulses of the moment, and have nothing to do with reflection. I feel that in writing to you, I am, perhaps for the first time, about to diminish myself in your esteem, and I would avoid doing that if I could. But no, Percival; I will not forfeit what is so delightful to me; consider me as falling into a sudden illness, watch its crisis, and prescribe a remedy. First, however, hear the case, then exercise your judgment, and I will be as docile a patient as the nature of my distemper will admit.

The flurry of Arabella's spirits at the time of our quitting the rotunda, prevented her from observing that the very few sentences I addressed to her on our way to the door were still spoken in a feigned voice, and it was not till the chaise was beyond the ring, that she remarked the caution and my taciturnity at once. Calling me by a name which I fear you already know, my friend, she anxiously in-

quired into the meaning of them. The perturbation of my own mind was intolerable, nor could I stifle it. A husband sitting by his wife, and taken for her paramour: resentment, and deep resentment, mingled with the dishonourable tenderness I could not overcome. I could answer her only with groans and sighs. Her alarm increased, and she eagerly exclaimed, "I am betrayed—or—Sir, this "is some mistake."—"Yes, a dreadful mistake, "Madam," said I, resuming my own voice, and laying aside my mask, "a dreadful mistake." There needed not the light of the moon, though it shone bright, to discover to her conscious mind that he who spoke to her was her injured husband. She screamed, and involuntarily laid her hand upon the door of the carriage as determined to throw herself out of it. I caught her arms, and held her to the seat. Overcome by her agitation, and the struggles she used to free herself from my hold, she fainted in my arms.

It was impossible for me to stop the carriage at any house without running the risk of her exposing our situation on her first coming to herself; this thought counteracted the suggestions of my alarm, and perceiving that she breathed, I resolved on supporting her in this state till she recovered, contenting myself with admitting the air, and applying her salts. It was not till we passed the turnpike going into Kensington that she came to herself: as the postboy stopped to pay, she heaved a deep sigh, and on his continuing she moved, asked faintly where she was, and gently raised herself; upon which I ventured to pronounce her name. "It is "he," she exclaimed, "it is Stormont!" and making another effort to open the chaise door, her agitation again overpowered her, and she sunk to the bottom.

Imagine my situation and my horror, dear Percival; I cannot describe either to you with that force it requires. Arabella had repeated swoonings; I attempted in vain to moderate the excess of sensibility which shook her frame, but she would not attend to me, and the very sound of my voice only served to raise the perturbation I was anxious to allay. She was insensible of our passing Hounslow, where we changed horses, but recovering soon after, and throwing herself as far from me as she could, she placed her hands over her face, and remained silent a considerable time. She then became sufficiently collected to say, whither are you carrying me, and what are you going to do with me? Dreading that I might cause a relapse, I spoke to her in the mildest tone I could assume, and, avoiding every expression that might convey the slightest reproach, I requested her to be calm, assuring her that I would wait with patience for an explanation, and that I did not doubt she would give me a very satisfactory one. I then told her that I had prepared the servants at Clifdon Hall for our arrival, and that we were not far from home. I entreated her to calm herself as much as possible, to endeavour to get some rest after what she had been suffering, and to hope that our conversation in the morning would restore tranquillity to both our minds. She made me no reply, and I was afraid to proceed.

We continued silent till we entered the avenue of Clifdon. On turning into the great gates, she said, "I am ill: I beg on our arrival to be left immediately and all night by myself; your goodness will lead you to grant the only request I make, and whatever is to become of me I will submit without a murmur." I promised compliance, and we both relapsed into silence for the few remaining minutes

of our continuing in the chaise, which soon drew up to the hall, where the servants were already in waiting. Arabella happened to be next the door that was opened, through which she hurried without staying for my assistance, and making as much haste up the stairs as her exhausted state would allow, entered her chamber followed by a maid. Keeping my promise, I suffered her to retire without opposition, and came myself to the library, where, in too perturbed a state of mind to think of repose, I sat down to write to you. But I previously thought it proper to account in some manner to the housekeeper for our taking separate rooms, which I ascribed to the illness of her mistress, to whom I desired she would attend, and I ordered her to send the servants to bed, as it was now near two o'clock. As for myself, the tent-room adjoining my library being always kept ready, I told her I should lie there: sleep is out of the question.

I have related to you the sequel of this turbulent day, and am now alone; but I cannot sleep, Percival. Since I laid down my pen, I have walked miles from end to end of the room, and I have thrown myself on the bed, but I cannot sleep. How poignant have been my reflections! how deep a wound has been given to my peace! You, Percival, can testify the excess of love I have felt for this ungrateful woman; you can judge whether I have merited the affliction with which she has overwhelmed a heart that beat only to render her happy. Did I leave any means neglected that could gratify her wishes? Did I fail to anticipate them? Had I become careless of those charms that first captivated me? Did I leave the delightful task of praising them to others? She was the idol that I worshiped; she was loveliness itself in my eyes. Too lovely woman! Even at this moment when she has stung me to the

soul; at this moment, when it is perhaps dishonourable not to resent, that loveliness sways my imagination, and enslaves the weak heart which she has spurned. How dare I avow this vice of spirit to such a man as Percival? Do not despise me, my friend; at least suspend contempt till you have heard what Arabella says—What Arabella says! fool! fool! can she, dare she attempt to prove herself innocent? to lay claim to that purity which is the bond of love? Has she not troubled the fountain of confidence? Must not our lives in future run in a turbid stream? Oh! friend! oh! Percival! my sensations are at war; never, I fear, to be at peace again.

I shall now dispatch my letter, that it may meet the mail at Burnham, as I know your intention of waiting in town for it. It has long been light; but what comfort does the day now promise me? How can Arabella see me? Alas! how can I see her? Adieu! I shall direct my next to the Elms.

LETTER XXX.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

A retrospect—Festivities—A Pegasean amble—A happy and grateful spirit—Hereditary fortune—An idea of banishing poverty from the world—A noble revenue—Mr. Stockton—A congress of benevolence—The helmsmen of happiness—Oxford Joe—Joseph Radley—Edward's eulogium of his father—A scheme for producing happiness—The kind of good arising from luxury—One of the most useful classes of society not benefited by the luxury of the rich—The disposition of a large income—Usury—A singular mode of heightening the relish of kisses.

Elms.

YOUR Lordship's letter gave me infinite pleasure. I had anticipated the delight you would receive from the Bevil-lodge packet, and I am rejoiced to find you convinced that Edward's outset was that of nature. Aye, my Lord, and you shall be convinced that his progress is that of nature, unsophisticated with that malignity, with those erroneous propensities, which some wits, judging from themselves, and from the unnatural state of many of the race of man, have imperiously ascribed to it. Virtue is the natural state of man, and every vice is a deviation from nature.

I promised to make Edward and his family the subject of my letters to your Lordship; and having gratified you with some past delightful scenes, I will soon return to the present; but first let me bring him and his Julia home after their marriage.

The ceremony was performed a few months before Edward was of age, in the church at Stratford, by the worthy Attley, rector of the parish, who had long lived on terms of intimate friendship with Bevil, and was a great favourite of Julia's. The lovers

were married in June, and passed the summer and the beginning of the autumn in visiting various parts of England. In the end of September they came to the Elms, of which Edward took possession, and he and his lovely bride received visits of congratulation from all the neighbourhood. His tenants were not the least happy beings on this occasion: to the double motives of rejoicing on his coming of age and marriage, Edward added that of renewing such leases as expired at Michaelmas at the old rents, and of promising the like to the rest at the expiration of their respective leases. The whole country seemed in a continued state of festivity for weeks. Mr. and Mrs. Bevil had met the bride and bridegroom here according to appointment; repeated dinners and balls were given at the family seats whose possessors had the happiness of knowing the master of the Elms, and every farmer seemed to keep open house. Your Lordship will conceive the bliss of our lover-husband, and the partner of his heart. Bevil's cup of joy overflowed; so did his wife's; and so did mine. I declare, my Lord, it was the happiest time of my life.

The autumn was remarkably fine and warm, the verdure lingered on the foliage, and the rich varying tints of the season gave a delightful glow to the beautiful scenery around the Elms. "The Al-"mighty first planted a garden, and it is the purest "of human pleasures," says Lord Bacon: "it is "the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man, "without which buildings and palaces are but gross "handy-works." Edward's father had a fine taste both for the works of art and of nature; he not only ornamented the inside of his house with the paintings of the great masters, and collected curious pieces of antiquity, but laid out the grounds about it with an elegant simplicity that captivated the eye

and refreshed the spirits. The lawn, the gentle slope, the wooded walk, the silver stream, now purling over pebbles, now seen deep and distant meandering through meadows, till skirting the forest it is lost at the winding of the noble wood that plumes it as it proudly rolls along; the village spire, the neat village caught at different points, the heath, remote views of rich pastures, and an inclosed country, with mansions peeping through trees and over hills, and all the beauties of the grand scale, were united by him at the Elms. Rustic seats, alcoves, and temples, were not forgotten; and his grotto is perhaps the most beautiful one in England. Put these various parts together, my dear Lord, and when you have formed the scenery in your imagination, give it all the gay bustle of joy and mirth which I have told you attended the arrival of Edward and Julia; see groups of villagers dancing on the green, hear the wild notes of uneducated maids, and turn not a deaf ear to the mellow tones of the thrush, the blackbird, and the woodlark, which at that season were renewed in all the hedges and groves of the Elms. Your Lordship allows me to mount my Pegasus at times.

One evening as the sun was approaching the horizon, while my eyes were feasted with the animated scenes of human joy, and the beauties of the vegetable world, Edward completed my delight by an emanation of soul, compared to which how fades all that the senses can experience from the nicest combinations of grounds, or from a view of the loveliest form and features! We stood upon the terrace adjoining the back front of the house. In coming out, he had suffered Julia and his friends to proceed on the lawn towards the villagers, who were dancing at the lower extremity of it, while laying hold of my arm, he detained me at the door. "Towers," said he, "how lovely is this scene! how grateful to my

" soul! This paradise, those joyous hearts, those " happy friends, my charming Julia! And is all " this mine! are all these pleasures prepared for me! " gained without toil! am I master, and have I no- " thing to do but to enjoy them? of what then are " they the reward? the reward of being born the " eldest son of my father! Oh! my friend, assist " to preserve my intellect from intoxication; let me " not forget that I am a man; keep my duties ever " in my view, and animate me to fulfil the part which " Providence has assigned me. Yes, Great God! " I devote myself to thy will! Oh! may these " transports of my senses never have power to make " me forget that thou hast willed me to be the in- " strument of happiness to others!"

The tears of a grateful sensibility started to his eyes; and to mine too, my Lord. I said that hereditary fortune was certainly no part of the idea of reward. " Hereditary fortune," cried he, " is a " blessed instrument in two respects: when properly " used, it spreads happiness; and by affording lei- " sure, it enables the possessor to advance himself " to the sublimest points of his nature. I know," continued he, perceiving me smile, " that in those " very respects it may be a cursed instrument; that " it may propagate misery, and tempt the soul to

> Embody and embrute, till she quite lose
> The divine property of her first being:—

" but, I said when properly used. And let me add, " that from all the judgment I am yet able to form, " I think our countrymen more studious of the pro- " per use of their fortunes than the wealthy of any " other country on the face of the globe. Affluence " should elevate the mind, and I believe it generally " does in this happy island; not, however, that I

" think benevolence extended by men of fortune to
" that glorious fulness of beneficence which should
" seem to be the will of the most benevolent, the
" most beneficent of beings. In considering the in-
" evitable inequality in the lot of my fellow creatures,
" I have often thought it possible to improve the
" condition of all into a state of felicity, or rather
" into a state of worldly comfort, for as to happiness
" that must depend upon the structure of every
" man's mind. Surely the conveniences of life
" might be rendered more general. Were every man
" to make it an indispensable duty to cast the in-
" fluence of his fortune to a certain circumference
" around him, do you not think that poverty might
" be banished from the world?" I told him the thought was worthy of him, but that the more he examined the system of life the more would he be convinced that labour and industry were the genuine remedies of poverty. " Granted," he replied, " and
" it is not only impossible, but it would be cruel to
" supersede them: it is to see them adequately re-
" warded, to prevent exertion from exceeding
" strength or extinguishing spirit, to encourage
" early marriages, and to procure for the mothers of
" families the ease necessary for the rearing of
" healthy children; it is to supply the deficiences
" occasioned by sickness, to afford hours of relaxa-
" tion and pleasure to the young, and years of cheer-
" ful inactivity to the old: it is in short to make
" man content with his being, that the rich should
" use their fortune, and consider themselves but as
" stewards appointed by their Creator for the
" management of terrestrial affairs in behalf of the
" rest of mankind. Such, dear Towers," added he,
" am I resolved to consider myself; but I want
" advice; I want your friendship more than ever, to
" help me to investigate the great concerns of life, and

"to consolidate the plans now floating in my mind. "Happy as I am; and love, friendship, fortune, unite "to make me happy; I have still more extensive "projects of bliss in view, and my imagination flies "beyond the sphere on which we are placed for the "present."

This was the language of Edward Percival, my dear Lord; a language which the age is *too refined* to bear, and which would have drawn even from you a month ago the pestiferous ejaculation (pardon me, my Lord,) of "too moral by half!"

When the festivities had subsided, Edward's first business was to take a minute and accurate survey of all the property of which he was now master, and which was totally unfettered. The former trust upon the old estates had expired in his father's person, and those raised by the will of my old friend, of which I have already told your Lordship I was one of the trustees, were very simple, and only provided for the contingencies of his children dying under age and without issue. Nor had the lawyers had any work on Edward's marriage. Bevil had previously told him that all he possessed should one day be his in right of his daughter, and that ten thousand pounds were ready for him immediately. He had also before me, observed to him, the disproportion there was between his girl's little fortune and the dower to which the law would entitle her out of his estates if no settlement were made, urging a proportionate jointure. To this, Percival was deaf, only begging not to receive his Julia's portion till we all met here.

The rent-toll of the Elms displayed upwards of six thousand a year; that of Woodville, part of which lies in Berkshire, three thousand a year: and there fell to his share one hundred thousand pounds stock in the three *per cent. consols*, which being three

thousand a year more, he became master of the noble revenue of twelve thousand a year. The residue of my old friend's fortune consisted of a beautiful little estate in Berkshire, called the Barn, the income of which was fifteen hundred pounds a year, and fifty thousand pounds more in the funds; of which twenty thousand pounds and the Barn were bequeathed to Charles, and the remaining thirty thousand pounds to Caroline: and by the way, my Lord, I have been guilty of a very great omission in not informing you that Caroline accompanied her brother to the Elms; but of her more hereafter.

Edward having thoroughly informed himself of his affairs, and digested a plan for the regulation of his conduct, panted to open his heart to the few loved friends that were now inmates of the Elms; among whom was Mr. Stockton; the worthy Stockton, whom I have already mentioned to your Lordship as Edward's tutor, and who remained at Oxford when my friend, on the death of his father, came hither to console his mother. He is a clergyman of an unblemished life and truly amiable manners. He always, and justly, possessed the esteem and affection of the Percival family. He had no fortune of his own; but having been introduced at the Elms by a neighbouring gentleman, his conduct and learning had led to the connection that followed; and never did any man fulfil more conscientiously the duties of a tutor. It was the intention of Edward's father to have presented him to a considerable living, a duty which has devolved on his pupil, but which has not yet been in his power, nor has he hinted his design to Stockton, who, whenever it happens, will, I believe, receive it with reluctance, as the consequence must be a resignation of his happy situation here. By the will of the late Mr. Percival he became entitled to an annuity of two hundred pounds,

and a sum of five hundred pounds down. The interest he had gained in his pupil's affection had matured into a warm friendship, and a correspondence had not been neglected after their separation. In the last of his letters Edward had engaged him to be at the Elms to receive him and Julia; an invitation too grateful to his mind not to be eagerly accepted, and he had taken possession of his old apartments the day before their arrival.

Our family, then, consisted of the master and mistress of the mansion, Julia's father and mother, Caroline Percival, Stockton, and myself. Charles, at that time not twenty, was anticipating some of his consols in mirth and pleasures at Paris.

Soon after the bustle of visiting was over, Edward assembled us one morning in the library, without our perceiving any formality in the manner of his doing it, nor had the conversation that followed the appearance of one premeditated for that meeting. He had already acquired a habit of introducing topics of conversation with that graceful ease which leads the mind and fascinates attention. "To what a "sober family circle are we suddenly reduced!" said he, "and what a happy one! I believe there is "not a more congenial party throughout the king-"dom; and these placid moments invite me to open "my heart to those so dear to it as every one here. "Oh, Bevil! Oh, my mother! what a happiness "have you bestowed upon me! You, Towers, were "the contriver of my bliss! Stockton, you en-"deavoured to make me worthy of it: Julia, how "fully you complete and secure it!" Then turning to his sister who was the only person in the group not addressed: "My dear Caroline," added he, "your part is to come; you shall increase, by "sharing, my happiness. All my care now is how to "deserve it. That, my dear Mr. Stockton, is no

" easy task in affluence. Men who are born to for-
" tune are appointed by Providence to the admini-
" stration of a certain portion of the interests of the
" world: they are the helmsmen of happiness; and
" if they desert the wheel, is there any wonder that
" the even course should be lost? But the know-
" ledge requisite to steer well is not easily obtained.
" The heart and the understanding are frequently
" at variance, and the immature suggestions of be-
" nevolence are too often the parents of evil."—" In
" the earlier part of life," said Stockton, " this will
" be the case; but when men come to be long in the
" habit of regulating their sensations by their intel-
" lect, the eye fixes at once on the end of action,
" and the heart learns to reject means, however de-
" lightful to the feelings, that would diminish the
" proposed effect. Yet painful as the task is to rein
" benevolence in youth, it must be done, or it will
" often produce mischief and mortification. For
" instance, my dear friend, recollect a case of your
" own.—Madam," continued he, addressing Julia,
" the case was this: about three years ago Mr.
" Percival dropped his pocket-book, in which,
" among some other papers, there was a twenty
" pound bank note. We were at Oxford. The
" pocket-book happened to be picked up by a
" journeyman shoemaker, a man not deficient in
" industry, and of strictly honest principles. Direct-
" ed by a letter found among the papers to our
" apartments, he immediately repaired thither and
" found my friend alone.—' There master,' says the
" shoemaker, ' is something belonging to you. I
" was obliged to open it to see if I could find e'er a
" master for it, and so I come to know the value of
" it: but if there had been a hundred in it instead of
" twenty, it would have been all one to Joe.'—You
" will readily believe that Joe was rewarded; but

"with how much of the note do you think?"—"Perhaps," answered Julia, smiling, "with the "whole."—"Yes," continued Stockton, "Joe talk-"ed of his family, and carried the whole twenty "pounds away with him."—"I was certain of it," cried Caroline, "and I should have done so too." The sentiment was amiable in the bosom of a girl of fifteen, and the general smile of the party approved the genuine ardour of it. "Stay, stay, Caroline, "stay for the sequel," said her brother. "Would "Miss Percival," resumed Stockton, "ruin a man "for his honesty? Joe was not only honest, as you "find, but he was, as I told you, industrious. He "maintained his family by his business; his usual "earnings went to his wife and children, and he "made this a point of conscience: but then he "commonly contrived to extra-task himself in the "course of the week, and he thought he had a right "to consecrate the profits of such tasks to the gratifi-"cation of a little propensity which he had not been "able to overcome, and which his overgains were "too small to render very prejudicial. Unfortu-"nately he conceived that he had a right to make "also a separate use of what he called his God-send, "and for several weeks after it fell into his hands, "Joe was in a state of continual intoxication, which "brought on a fever that nearly cost him his life; "his family was neglected and almost starved, be-"fore we were made acquainted with the conse-"quence of Mr. Percival's liberality."—"Poor "creatures!" exclaimed Caroline, "that was very "hard upon them."—"Oh!" said Stockton, "they "were repaid for their sufferings; and Joe, by your "brother's interposition with his employer, was re-"instated in his work; and, though he would never "give up his extra-tasks, his occasional potations "did not infringe upon the welfare of his wife and

" children. I mention the anecdote to show that " even virtuous impulses should be brought under " the dominion of the understanding."—" Clearly, " clearly, my dear Stockton," said Edward, "and the " lesson has not been lost on your pupil."—" It is " difficult, however," said Mrs. Bevil, " to withstand " the delightful impulses of benevolence, and to " keep them confined, till reflection and examination " bid them go coolly into action."—" And yet, my " dear," replied Bevil, " the dread of mischievous " consequences should have great weight in balan- " cing the spring of immediate pleasure. I think you " could match Mr. Stockton's Joe with a Joe of " mine."—" I have always differed with you on that " action, my dear Bevil," said she, " and I still " think that it not only did your heart honour, but " that you could not have answered it to your rea- " son to have acted otherwise." She then related the following anecdote of her husband, with an ardour habitual to her whenever she spoke of him. Julia and I were previously acquainted with it; but to Edward, his sister, and Stockton, it was new.

" The year after our marriage," said she, " we " were on a visit to some friends who lived at " Kensington. It was winter, and the frost was " very sharp. One day as Bevil was returning from " town he went through the King's garden, which " at that season was little frequented. In the ser- " pentine walk he saw a young man in a shabby " great coat, who, as he approached, went in among " the trees, where he passed him. Shortly the " stranger came running after him; and, when with- " in a few paces, presented a pistol and demanded " his purse.—I repeat the circumstances," conti- nued she, " exactly as Bevil told them to me. The " youth appeared to be about twenty, with a very " handsome face and person.—' I must have your

" purse, Sir,' said he.—' So you shall,' replied
" Bevil, taking out his purse, in which there were
" seven or eight guineas, and adding as he gave it,
" ' This is a very extraordinary place you have cho-
" sen: you are on foot, in a garden; there are gar-
" deners at the gates; you must be very fortunate
" if you escape; and as for your pistol, the report of
" it would be the very means of your being taken;
" you know that the consequence is the forfeiture of
" your life.'—' I care not for my life; I am weary of
" it, I am a miserable creature,' cried the robber;
" ' my mother and my sisters are perishing for want,
" and I will supply them if I die for it: for heaven's
" sake' continued he, with tears in his eyes, ' do
" not follow me, but suffer me to escape; this is the
" first robbery I ever committed, and I hope it will
" be the last: if I had made a practice of it, I should
" ask you for your watch, which I do not.'—He then
" averted his pistol," said Mrs. Bevil, " and, put-
" ting his hands together, begged earnestly that
" Bevil would not pursue him. Observe this,"
continued she warmly, " for here I rest my opinion
" as to Bevil's subsequent conduct. The pistol was
" turned away, the youth within two paces of the
" person he had robbed, in a supplicating posture,
" and before a man apparently stronger than himself
" Bevil threw his arms around him and seized him.
" He made no resistance, but falling on his knees
" delivered up both the pistol and the purse. A
" parley ensued, in the course of which some pas-
" sengers appearing at a distance in the same walk,
" the robber observed to Bevil that he was in his
" power; upon which they removed to the other side
" of the broad green walk, where he finished his
" tale, and the sum of it was, that he was the son of
" a man who had lived as butler with the late Lord
" Senoake, and who was at that time in the same

" capacity with a wealthy Baronet; that his father " had been very harsh to all his family, and had ac- " tually forsaken them; that he had himself been " placed by him with a hair-dresser; that his mother " and sisters had endeavoured to earn a subsistence " by taking in washing, which had failed them for " some time past, and that they had not bread for " that day without selling their clothes. Bevil hasti- " ly yielding to the impulse of his heart, gave him " the purse again, desiring him to run home with it " to his mother."—" God bless you, Sir," cried Ed- ward, " I could not but do the same myself were the " case to be mine to-morrow."—" I thought," said Stockton, " *that the lesson given by Oxford Joe had* " *not been lost on my pupil.*"—" But, my friend," replied Edward, " the cases are not similar."— " That depends upon the sequel," rejoined Stockton, and he repeated Percival's words to his sister, *Stay, stay, for the sequel:* " if it prove that general " consequences were sacrificed to private impulse, " there will be one striking resemblance in the " cases."—" Ah! my dear Caroline!" said Edward, taking his sister by the hand, " our hearts will show " their propensities, but let us both determine to " rally round the banners of reason."—" Mr. Stock- " ton is right," said Bevil; " the consequences were " deplorable. Before I let the young man go I took " a direction to his mother, told him where I lived, " and desired him to call upon me. I inquired, and " found his story nearly what he had represented. " His mother was not altogether perhaps in such " distress as to drive him to the desperate means he " took. He boldly came to my house, which I con- " sidered as a mark of his innocence, or of his vir- " tue, and I was meditating a scheme of providing " for him, when, one morning the post brought me " a letter from Buckingham, which on opening I

" found signed Joseph Radley, the name of my new " acquaintance, who had been attempting to rob " Captain B——, of the guards, by whom he was " taken, and the tenor of his epistle was to request " that I would appear in favour of his character."—Here, my Lord, we could none of us help laughing, in spite of the interest excited for the scoundrel by the previous account.—" I did not appear for his " character," continued Bevil, " and what was " worse, Captain B—— did not appear against him, " and he was discharged: I have several letters " which he wrote to me afterwards, earnestly en- " treating me to be his friend on similar occasions: " one was from the new prison, which, on receiving, " I showed to a gentleman who happened to be with " me when it was delivered, and who had the cu- " riosity to go and see him. He was sitting in his " cell with his arms folded, and his long hair hang- " ing loose down his back. When my friend said " that he was an acquaintance of Mr. Bevil's, he " asked sulkily why Mr. Bevil did not come him- " self?—' Can you think,' said my friend, ' that " he will interest himself for you after what has hap- " pened since he first knew you?'—' Then he had " no business,' replied Joe, ' to send you to stare at " me: but you may tell him I don't care; lawyer " Tag says there is not evidence against me. I " know I shall get off; and in the meantime I don't " choose to be made a gazing stock, so I wish you a " good day.'—After this report I made no farther " enquiry about the rogue, and knew that he escap- " ed that time, according to the prediction of law- " yer Tag, only by reading his dying speech and " confession, which were sent to me about a year " after by a friend. My name was at full length, as " the first person he had attempted to rob: his " whole career had been less than fifteen months;

" during which he confessed that he had collected " upwards of three hundred pounds in the course of " innumerable robberies, which he had committed " both alone and with associates; and for which he " at last paid the forfeit of his life. I am at times " inclined," continued Bevil, " to charge myself " with a considerable degree of imputation for the " crimes that appeared to have been the consequence " of an illegal lenity; but my good angel here has " the power of persuading me that the action was a " venial one, while she goes much farther with her- " self, and enjoys the remembrance of it as a worthy " one."—" I submit it to the company," cried Mrs. Bevil, " whether it was possible to treat as a villain " a youth who by averting his pistol absolutely " threw himself upon the mercy of the man whom " he might have shot?"—" Not only that," said Edward, " but I am confident that in a similar case, " the morals of many would be saved and settled by " such lenity as Mr. Bevil's."—" At least," said I, " Mr. Bevil might have thought so, had he pro- " ceeded against the youth, and the reflection would " have pained him through life."—Julia and Caro- line concurred in our sentiments.—" Then why " should I," exclaimed Stockton, "be over-righteous? " for to differ with this circle would deserve that " epithet. But I really agree with Mr. Percival, " that this case is not similar to that of Oxford Joe: " there a little caution as to character would have " prevented all the mischief; but I question whether " rigour in Mr. Bevil would have prevented the " consequences that followed his lenity, or similar " ones: for, although there is little doubt that the " royal clemency would have been extended to a " culprit of whom such favourable circumstances " must have been reported, a public pardon would " not reclaim him on whom such a conduct as Mr.

" Bevil's could fail to make an impression. I fear " an inspection of the criminal calendars would de- " monstrate, that very few who once escape the " halter after a trial before a jury ever die in a less " ignominious manner. Mr. Bevil would have act- " ed differently with a hardened offender, for the " sake of society, and in support of the laws; but " certainly he had every reason to hope well from " an unpractised youth in tears; and he but obeyed " the laws of benevolence, which are the laws of " heaven." This general testimony in favour of Bevil spread smiles upon his wife's face, and the nut-brown eyes of his daughter sparkled with delight.

Edward felt an emotion not unlike Julia's. " To " return then," said he, " to the observations that " gave occasion to this anecdote, and to return to " them strengthened by the remarks that have been " made, benevolence must be ruled by prudence; " but so ruled, it is the great business of life, the " chief instrument of man's happiness; and its laws, " as Stockton says, are the laws of heaven. Were " these laws well understood and generally obeyed, " into what narrow limits would vice and calamity " be driven! See the proof in the populous village " of the Elms. My father, blessed be his memory! " did more for the happiness of the good people " that inhabit it, by instilling his heavenly spirit, " than by all the use he made of his fortune, of " which too it is very visible he was no niggard. I " have at times compared my father with Fielding's " highly finished character of Allworthy, and seen " him improving upon it in several instances. One " of the most difficult things for a man of fortune to " do, is to lower himself to the standard of the in- " tellect, the feelings, and the manners of the un- " informed, simple, and laborious part of the com- " munity; and it is still more difficult to put them

" at a proper degree of ease with their superiors in " wealth and knowledge. That selfish interest " which too often usurps the throne of benevolence, " inspires a distrust of sincerity that raises a greater " barrier to mutual services than arises from the " distinction of rank and fortune. I say mutual " services, for whatever extent a man's purse may " command, to be served as my father was served, " that is with honesty, fidelity, and smiles, he must " condescend to serve his servants, and in some de- " gree disinterestedly. How completely master was " my father of this secret! I shall never forget how " much he was at home in all the farm-houses, and " with what ease he was received at every cottage. " It was not greatness affecting goodness; it was " genuine benevolence, the influence of which " spread to all connected with him. Kind actions " became the source of pleasure among the people; " and instead of being the result of casual applica- " tions for the sake of being useful to another, were " eagerly embraced as the grounds of sweet reflec- " tions also, which remained long after the actions " were past. What happy families farm these estates! " what a blest peasantry cultivate the land!"

Edward's eulogium of his father shot like an electric spark around our circle, and Mr. Stockton and I delighted him by adducing some instances of his father's amiable disposition. He paid a similar tribute to the memory of his mother; and was not only convinced himself, but convinced us, that a vast portion of human felicity had been produced by the conduct of his parents. He then repeated the remark which he had made to me on the ter- race, and contended that it was possible to banish poverty from the world, if the rich and the edu- cated would emulate the example of such benevo- lence. " As for my part," continued he " the very

" thought of misery is so painful to me, that it be-
" comes, in a manner, one of the greatest interests
" I have in life to remove it as much as possible.
" Neither Julia nor I have a taste for magnificence
" or luxury, and we have agreed to devote the
" greater part of the immense revenue that has
" fallen to our lot to the purchase of gratifications
" which, we are both convinced, give the highest
" relish to friendship and to love. But in our plans,
" conscious that we want assistance, we rely on this
" dear circle to enter into our views, to assist in
" promoting them, and to participate our happiness.
" I know all your hearts as well as my own; I
" know them to be so many sources of genuine
" benevolence: let us unite the streams, that we
" may act with more force; let the fortune Pro-
" vidence has placed in my hands be the general
" fund, and let us form a scheme for making it
" produce as much happiness as it can."

No doubt, my dear Lord, some of our great wits would have laughed to hear this; would have damned it with a sneer of, " moral!" or, " finely senti-
" mental!" for those geniuses, and the blockheads that ape them, have completely included insincerity in the expression of virtue. But not so the group which Edward was addressing: every countenance betokened the glow he had raised; every heart felt the sincerity of his language. "Nothing," said Julia with a divine smile, " can give such happiness as
" the bestowing of happiness."—" It is the bliss of
" a god," said I.—" Of the God of gods," added Stockton. Here you will remark, my Lord, that I spoke as a poet, Stockton in a much superior character, that of a divine. Bevil observed, that every man who spent his income added to the general welfare, and that the ease introduced into families by trade, should be supported by men of for-

tune. "True, Sir," said Edward, "and I readily "give our countrymen credit for mingling the plea- "sure of that thought with their luxuries: but I "have always questioned whether the ease intro- "duced in consequence of luxury, was accom- "panied with genuine happiness; whether they "who spent their lives in providing others with the "gratification of caprice, ever extended their own "ideas of enjoyment beyond it, or cultivated virtues "from which only that species of happiness can "arise that deserves the name, and such as you "would be solicitous to spread. I fear many a "worthless or thoughtless being lives in profusion "from possessing the art of taking the advantages "of the vices of mankind, while thousands of wor- "thy spirits are suffering from ignorance of petty "arts. I have particularly regarded the peasantry "as the most useful class; yet their labours never "advance their condition: they are contented to "earn a bare subsistence, and aim at nothing more. "To the comforts of this order of his fellow-crea- "tures the rich man adds nothing when he spends "his fortune in superfluous enjoyments. How many "extraordinary cases too are there of personal ne- "cessity and mental distress that require particular "interposition!"

Here Edward's ardour received a check from Stockton, who expatiated on the necessity of guarding against a romantic imagination, which too frequently overshot the mark of virtue aimed at, and was open to a thousand impositions by which villainy triumphed. "To some impositions," replied Edward, "we must make up our minds; but how "shall we be repaid by the real successes we may "hope! How to dispose of our income has been "among the most interesting subjects of my con- "versation with Julia during our excursion, and on

" this dear party we depend for approbation and " the felicity that arises from it. While we agree " that the general opinion of the world is not to be " despised, or its censure thoughtlessly incurred, " we determine to fix our chief delight in approba- " tion here, in this circle, and to oppose it as a " shield to the shafts of ridicule, or the engines of " condemnation, with which the rest of the world " may attack us. We think a third of our income " sufficient to support an establishment far superior " to our desires, and equal to the situation of the " greater number of the neighbouring gentlemen: " with those who have larger fortunes we wish not " to vie; and if there be any who would emulate " us, it shall not be in extravagance. Lest the " support of the houses and grounds here, and at " Woodville, may however require more than we have " computed for, we mean to devote an annual two " thousand pounds to any extraordinary occasions " that may arise either from those or other causes. " This you see will make the half of our income. " Julia and I could be happy, as we have often as- " sured each other, with as many hundreds as we " have now devoted thousands to our establish- " ment ——." As he said this, he took her hand and kissed it: " but we are not the less happy," continued he, " in having it in our power to enjoy " the elegancies we admire, and which give lustre " to the nation. Although we have no delight in " magnificence ourselves, we have no objection to " it in a secondary point of view, as it manifests the " riches of a country; but where splendor is con- " trasted with poverty, and is only the proof of in- " dividual wealth, does it not shock rather than " gratify?"

Edward here again spoke of his father with enthusiasm, and made us observe, that his passion for

beautifying the Elms had not interfered with the nobler passion of beautifying the country, which he had rendered a paradise. He then proceeded with the disposal of his income: "I think," said he, "that another annual two thousand pounds are "enough for accumulation at interest; it will "amount to a large sum if we live many years."— "Accumulation, brother!" exclaimed Caroline, "are you going to be a money-lender? What need "have you for accumulation?"—"My dear Ca- "roline," replied Edward, "your fortune and "Charles's did not descend to my father. The "Barn was purchased after Charles was born. My "father was no miser, yet accumulation was one "of his principles. He thought it incumbent upon "him to transmit his paternal estates to his eldest "son undiminished, and by means of accumulating "a portion of those and a great part of my mother's "dowry, he was enabled to perform what he thought "a duty. I have imbibed his opinion, Caroline."— Caroline was satisfied.—"Here then are two thirds "of our income engaged," continued Edward; "a "third remains to be disposed of."—"That," said Julia, "Edward wishes to put out at the best in- "terest that can be got for it."—"Nay, it is Julia's "avaricious wish," said he, "and she was the first "to propose it. Shall I tell you how it happened? "In the course of our excursion several unusual "occasions occurred, in which we separately had "the good fortune of making some worthy people "happy; on imparting the circumstances, I pressed "Julia to my bosom, and —" Edward hesitated.— "Out with it," said I.—"Let me finish your "sentence," said Stockton;—"and they gave a "heightened relish to the kiss that followed."— "They did," replied Edward; "the observation "was mutually made, and in the calculation of our

"expences—" —"the interest of your lips were "not forgotten," cried Caroline, who, thinking the speech, which had hastily escaped her, too bold, coloured.—"So you finish sentences too, Caroline," said Julia, hiding her blushes by drawing Caroline to her bosom.—"A pretty round sum, however," quoth Bevil, "for heightening the relish of kisses; "the third of a man's income!"—"A trifle, Sir," replied his lovely daughter. "A trifle, indeed," said Edward, "even in that sense of it; but how "does it sink when compared to the happiness it "may create! It was Julia's proposal that the re- "maining four thousand pounds should be dedicat- "ed to the noblest use; that of making others "happy. Assist us then, my friends, to dispose of "this superfluous four thousand a year, and let us "use it in banishing from the earth a certain por- "tion of misery."

My Lord, the pleasure I have in recollecting the conversation that passed at this meeting, which Julia termed the congress of benevolence, has seduced me far beyond the bounds of a letter; but I have no apprehension of a reproach from you, yet I think it necessary to desist from this style of minute description, that I may draw to a conclusion.

If spirits, as has been said, sometimes attend to the conversations of men, never did they listen to one more suited to give pleasure to a celestial audience. Plans for diminishing the evils of life, and for spreading happiness, were discussed with ardour and sincerity, and it was impossible for any of us to refuse becoming the agents of the benevolent Edward and Julia.

At this meeting Bevil gave his son-in-law the ten thousand pounds he mentioned as Julia's fortune, which Percival abstained from refusing only through

motives of delicacy to his father-in-law, and which he very properly devoted to the accumulating fund. He then expressed a wish that we should be much together at the Elms, allotting rooms that were to be always considered as ours, however separated the party might be, and whether he and Julia were at home or not.

From that time to the present moment happiness has been the constant word; and not only the Elms and its neighbourhood, but many and remote parts of the kingdom, have felt the influence of the congress of benevolence. Some interruption of bliss has been experienced by Edward in his thoughts of his brother, for whom he has a very sincere and warm affection. His journey to town too has been productive of great pain to him. A gentleman with whom he formed a friendship at college is unhappy. The cause, I am confident, will not long remain a secret, if it is one now; but before I spoil my letter with an alloy of baser metal, let me acknowledge my obligations to the little Jew for the *rhapsody*, as you choose to style it, of your pen, and to the *Cordon Bleu* for the anecdotes of the packet-boat.

As you have now gone through a volume, you will readily dispense with my pursuing at present the topics your letter affords. Adieu!

P. S. I shall expect your account of the young Beauty with Lady Duberley.

LETTER XXXI.

MISS COVERLEY TO PERCIVAL.

Love or not?

YOUR solicitude to promote my happiness has my warmest acknowledgments, and demands the utmost candour. Every thing that comes from your mouth or pen has weight on my mind, even when not congenial to my sentiments: on some philosophical subjects, however, I shall submit my genuine thoughts to your judgment. On one I doubt we shall not agree, and I think it is the only one on which I risk your good opinion; a risk, I own, I tremble to run, and shall reserve it for maturer consideration.

With respect to St. Valeri, I will deserve your friendship by my sincerity. I was scarcely more than a child when I left France, yet he had taken several opportunities of professing the most ardent passion for me; and although I cannot say I ever experienced for him an inclination that could induce me to marry him, I confess I was pleased with his sprightliness, with the ardour of his manner, and with being the object of his passion; nor have I since met among those who have addressed me, any one who has made the like impression upon me. If, however, this impression were love, if I at all comprehend what it is, I imagine I should be ready to sacrifice myself and fortune for the sake of the object; which is not the case. I feel that I should have a great pleasure in relieving him from embarrassment; and as I am resolved to get rid of a great quantity of the wealth fallen, I know not why, to my lot, by dispersing an income, the whole of which

I never can use on myself, I would fain have him reap the advantage of my disposition.

I understand he is more than ten thousand pounds in debt, and that it is nearly the value of the only estate remaining in his possession. If he could be cured of gambling, how happy should I be to enable him to disencumber that estate, and give him unlimited leisure to return my advance. This is an action that would be productive of infinite gratification to my mind: it is one that would, by the world, be called absurdly romantic, but to which, I think, you would affix the value of that character that originally belonged to the Romans, a people whose greatness of spirit compels our admiration, and whom we are too weak to imitate.

But although I should rejoice to save St. Valeri, I think it is hardly possible to save a gamester, whose whole dependence rests on chance. Perhaps misfortune, and the revolution in his country, have been able to extinguish this vice, and he may only want assistance to become a valuable being. Think what I should gain could I effect it; I mean merely as a delightful reflection.

I am not certain that I would not admit him as a lover; and far from certain that I would. I endeavoured to gain a knowledge of his character; but the more I enquired, the more was I persuaded that his ruling passion absorbed all others, and I naturally inferred that my person was but the secondary object of his addresses. Besides, he never would allow that he had impaired his fortune; and while I was constantly warned of his being a beggar, he did not fail to assure me of the extent of his possessions, and of the disinterestedness of his love. Upon the whole then you see, that respecting this man I am mistress of myself, and that there is no apprehension of my yielding my heart to a being

who shall not prove worthy of it. Satisfied of this, do as you propose, find him and probe him: you will render me an inestimable favour; and as soon as you have discovered him, pray let me know.

A good opinion of marriage comes well from your pen, my dear friend; but how few are there from whom such an opinion can flow? This is the one subject on which I fear you and I shall not agree; but to secure my peace, let me add, we should agree were every husband a Percival.

LETTER XXXII.

PERCIVAL TO MISS COVERLEY.

A husband for a girl of sense and spirit.

YOUR last letter has increased my admiration of you. The candour you display, and the strength of reasoning that renders you mistress of a passion, at once the strongest and most seducing, should the object of it prove unworthy of you, elevate you on the scale of being to an enviable height. Were St. Valeri a man of worth, involved in misfortunes, far from thinking I should do a wrong action in being instrumental to your union, I should pride myself on it, as being conducive to the happiness of two beings who deserve to be happy. Prudence is a cardinal virtue; but I am not apt to mistake ambition or avarice for prudence.

According to the rules of the world, you have a right to a husband of three times your own fortune, if he were to be found; but will the rules of the world ensure happiness to such a mind as yours? I respect fortune, as it is the means of setting men in

many noble points of view, but I do not consider it as essential to our best enjoyments. Competence, indeed, is essential, because poverty confines and wearies out the soul. With competence, and by that word meaning enough to supply all reasonable wishes, happiness is in the reach of all. But while I am distinguishing between prudence and the desire of increasing wealth and power, which often passes for it, your letter convinces me that you are not forgetful of the real virtue, which consists in keeping guard for future happiness against the passing inclinations of the present moment. Prudence has nothing to do with the fortune of the man on whom you may choose to bestow your hand. Whether he be master of one hundred, or one hundred thousand pounds is totally immaterial: but, it is of the utmost importance that he should be a man of good sense, of a good heart, of mental endowments, and personal accomplishments; one acquainted with the world, but above its prejudices; whose understanding is equal to your own, and his learning superior; who can reason profoundly, yet intermix gaiety with reason; who unites the tenderness of love with the spirit of philosophy; and knows how to use wealth without diminishing it. Has such a man ten thousand pounds a year? so much the better. Is he of broken fortune, and involved in calamity? Take care of competence, and he cannot be too dearly purchased. Yes, my dear Miss Coverley, were the man in question such a one, the sacrifice of twice ten thousand pounds should prove no bar to your union; nor should I in friendship think of stating it to you as a loss: but when I consider him in the character of a gambler, I shudder to think upon what a precipice you stand. The two greatest evils in life, disgrace and poverty, are generally the lot of a gambler. Then his wife!

and his children! Heaven defend you from such a lot!

Although it is possible to make a settlement of your fortune independent of the man you marry, there is no making a settlement of independent sensations. Fondness and brutality, by turns, gain or force compliance, and ruin must ensue, were your fortune ten times what it is. Be cautious, my friend, in the disposal of your hand. It requires all the wisdom and all the acuteness you are mistress of to distinguish between the lover of yourself and the lover of your fortune. With the former, be his pecuniary circumstances what they may, I think you would be a happy woman; with the latter you would not fail to be miserable. Would I could be your gardian angel! I would carefully conceal your fortune while I displayed your understanding, your virtues, your beauty, and accomplishments. I would dive into the hearts of your admirers, and have the happiness of seeing the man who could make you happy, throw himself at your feet while he was ignorant of your wealth. This too is romantic; but I feel a glow even in the fiction that paints *love ascertained.* I should rejoice if the mind and sincerity I have been describing lodged in the bosom of St. Valeri; but indeed I think it best not to encourage such a hope. You find that every enquiry tends to shew the contrary, and even to yourself he did not overvalue truth. Love is a passion with which no kind of deceit or concealment can mingle. The heart of a man in love is, to her whom he loves, as transparent as the most limpid spring; whatever is there is open to the sight.

In the Chevalier's case, however necessary I might have found it to have kept up the notion of my fortune to all the world beside, I should have addressed you thus: "Judge of my passion by the

" sincerity with which I lay myself open to you. " By associating with the rich and the gay, I have " been drawn into the vortex of their dissipation, " and have improvidently ruined myself. Your " fortune is desirable, but it is with you that I am " in love, and love dispels duplicity. I would rather " die than throw a fortune-hunter into your arms. " I preclude the possibility of being thought one by " forewarning you that I am not worth a shilling. " I will this instant leave you for ever, unless, after " what I have avowed, you can return my affection, " and invite me to enjoy with you a happiness for " which I look alone to love." Suppose him to have been ruined by any other means than by gaming, what would have been the reply of your generous heart to so noble an avowal? It would have been answered with your hand, and the answer would have been ratified by reason. But as the case is, I must discourage any hope of his proving worthy of you.

Your notions respecting wealth are congenial to my own, and I could not read your intention of dispersing your income, without an uncommon glow of sympathy. Still let me remind you that it is incumbent on the inheritors of fortune to preserve it entire. He who diminishes his capital injures his family, and robs his successors of the powers of generosity, and of the enjoyment of many liberal virtues which descended to him, and the course of which he has no right to put an end to, though he is at liberty to direct it.

I think there will be no great difficulty in finding St. Valeri; but when we know where he is, if you are satisfied that he is not unworthy the generosity you wish to indulge, let me advise you to have it executed so cautiously as to prevent his suspecting you of it. I have dwelt thus long on the subject,

because I feel of what consequence it is to you, my charming friend, to be supported, encouraged, and assisted with all the strength and assiduity of friendship, at a crisis of life the most important; as it is, if I may so express myself, the seed-time of happiness. Consider yourself as now sowing, in all your actions, the future support of your mind. Examine well what you throw into the bosom of time, and endeavour to prevent the grains of misery from mingling with your promised harvest of happiness.

And in what, my dear philosopher, shall we differ on the subject of marriage? For my part, I think we shall agree; for though to me it proves the first of blessings, I know it may be a curse. Like all other good things, it depends upon the disposition of the possessor to enjoy. Come, write these opinions of yours to me, and I will be frank in my reply. Meanwhile adieu.

LETTER XXXIII.

FREDERICK STORMONT TO PERCIVAL.

A new elopement—A deficiency of gall.

Dear Percival,

All is now over, and I will write. Your friend's peace is broken, his happiness is gone, irretrievably gone. Oh! why am I thus formed? to cherish while I condemn! to love while I despise! Is it in nature? or am I a monster? Who, except Stormont, but would have spurned the profligate from his sight, instead of wooing corruption to dwell in his arms? Even now the remembrance of her smiles softens my soul, nor can the cruelty of her

departure rouse sufficient wrath to strip her beauty of its charms. Infatuated man! Can neither infidelity nor cruelty kindle a spark of rage or revenge? Shall the tears of affection and fond regret be shed over deliberate vice?

Percival, my distempered imagination admits no cure. I release you from the attempt; the disease is mortal, but of so painful a nature;—have you not heard of a poor mariner, who, endeavouring to escape from his ship which was on fire, made a false step, and was so wedged to the vessel by some timbers that he could not move, and who, as the flames approached him, drew his knife from his pocket, and by a resolute blow, avoided the torture he must have otherwise endured? If you shudder, Percival, it is because you mistake me. In this I will not lose my title to your esteem: no, my heart is tortured, but my brain is not so delirious as to suggest a thought of self-murder: in striving to escape the torment of imagination, although I care not for my life, fear not that your friend's hand shall execute so impious a deed. I have taken up my pen to finish the account of Arabella's conduct, and when I lay it down, I shall bend my mind on the means of avoiding misery without a crime.

While I was dreaming of conciliation and oblivion, and teaching fancy to extract, even from error, sweeter hopes than I had known before, anticipating the enjoyments of a retired and happy life, Arabella, the lost, the abandoned Arabella, was meditating an eternal separation. The morning that I dispatched my last to you, when I was nearly exhausted by agitation and want of rest, I received a note from her, in which she besought me in the most earnest manner to leave her a few days at Clifdon, to recover herself. Her expressions were calculated to lull suspicion, and to soothe

my wounded mind. She observed, that I could not be surprised that she should wish not to meet me for a few days, and till she had prepared herself to see me without the pain that would attend an immediate interview. She pressed me to be silent on the subject of our agitation; and to wait her explanation before I enquired farther into an affair that at best could never be satisfactory to me. If I complied with her request, she trusted to my honour to execute a commission for her. The cabinet in her dressing-room in town contained her casket, in which were many letters she wished to burn: these it was impossible to prevent my seeing, if I thought proper to do so, but she said she was too well acquainted with my principles to doubt that the very possession of the key, which she sent me, would be an irresistible inducement for my sending her the casket immediately.

The whole tenor of her note, my dear Percival, was framed to strengthen the doting visions of my brain, and I embraced her letter as the first step towards the renewal of my happiness. I returned a consolatory and encouraging answer, and without a moment's delay I left Clifdon. I arrived in town about five o'clock, where, overcome by fatigue and anxiety, I went directly to bed, and next morning dispatched Humphry to Arabella with her casket, which, besides the letters she mentioned, contained all her jewels. How little did I suspect the paltry art she was using to get them into her possession! I know not whether the discovery of her infidelity, or the knowledge of this low, illiberal trick rankles most. When I had been three days in town, I became anxious to return to Clifdon, and I began a letter to her in a style not only soothing, but fondly impassioned. I was palliating her crime, I was painting the future happiness of life, I was address-

ing her as my beloved Arabella, when the post brought me the enclosed letter from her; a letter that came like a thunderbolt upon me, and from the effects of which I shall never recover.

I will not, Percival, paint to you the tortures I have endured; I will not wring your friendly heart with sympathetic pangs, in a misery which no friendship can solace, no participation can lighten. Do not, however, I again beseech you, despise me. I will endeavour to collect sufficient fortitude to bear calamity, though my heart is so constituted as not to admit comfort in one so great, and so unexpected. You will find from her letter, that she left Clifdon immediately after writing it. I know not where, nor with whom she is. I mean to comply with her request, for I own to you my feelings are very different from those of an injured husband; and when I have done that, and made some arrangements with my banker and agents, I shall leave England for a time, if not for ever. Heaven bless you, my friend, and your Julia, and long continue to you that happiness of which it has thought proper to deprive me!

LETTER XXXIV.

MRS. STORMONT TO HER HUSBAND.

(Inclosed in the preceding.)

A specimen of ignorance and depravity.

Dear Frederic,

You are a good man, and I am afraid this letter will make you very unhappy: but I hope not, for I

do not wish it. Why should you be unhappy, Frederic, at what is so natural? Love, you know, will not be controlled: and what woman was ever constant to one man, but through fear? You know what our divine poet says:

> Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
> Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.

How can one always love the same person as warmly as at first? and you are not such an oaf as to think that marriage makes any alteration in nature. Indeed, Frederic, I loved you very passionately before I married you, and for some time afterwards, and I love you still, as a good creature: but not as I did at first, with rapture.

You know it's very well to teach constancy, and purity, and so forth, to young people; but you know when one comes into the world, and forms one's own mind according to nature, that we know better; and do you suppose, Frederic, that any woman of fashion is true to her husband? Now, don't be unhappy, there's a good creature. If you had not discovered me, I don't tell you that I did not mean to do as all other women of fashion do that an't found out, pretend to virtue, and so forth; but now that there is no concealing it from you or from the world, I must tell you sincerely, Frederic, that I never was formed to vegetate a wife. Novelty, variety, nature, and so forth, have possession of my heart; and, as long as I have life, I mean to live and to enjoy my existence according to nature.

I can't conceive what made me faint in the chaise as we were coming to Clifdon. It must have been owing, as Mr. Steele the apothecary would say, to a revulsion of blood on a sudden disappointment of seeing a husband instead of a lover: though I beg

your pardon, Frederic, for I believe you love me as much as ever, which, without any disparagement to my beauty, I have often wondered at; for if I was a man I could not love an angel for a constancy. If I did not know I was acting naturally, I should really think that that fainting and agitation I suffered in the chaise proceeded from shame and so forth. It certainly, however, was a revulsion of the blood on seeing you. Dear Frederic, now don't be unhappy; you don't know how agreeable a new mistress will be, even if she is not so handsome as me—do try.

When you receive this I shall be many miles from Clifdon, and where you cannot find me, so don't attempt it, for I am resolved to be happy and free. My beauty will always procure me lovers, and I have such plans of happiness in my head that nothing can equal. I know you won't be unhappy long, Frederic, or I should be miserable, for I sincerely wish you happy, and think you one of the best of men. It was very kind of you to send me the casket with my letters, and the jewels and notes I had received for my pin-money, which were also in it. I really think, Frederic, in nature I am entitled to the fortune you received with me, which was very small when compared to yours; but the six thousand pounds will be of great service to me, and I know you are above enforcing law: I ask no more than that you should put that again into the hands of Mr. Golding to be at my disposal. I hope you won't refuse me this trifle, Frederic, and as long as I live I will love and respect you for it. My clothes, and whatever else you may think mine, you may also send to Mr. Golding, to whom I shall write as soon as I leave Clifdon.

Adieu! dear Frederic, for some time. I hope we shall meet by and by, and be very good friends;

in the mean time amuse yourself, form attachments, and don't be unhappy I beg you, for believe me I have a great regard for you, and ever will be

Your sincere friend, &c.

ARABELLA NUGENT STORMONT.

LETTER XXXV.

PERCIVAL TO STORMONT.

Vice and love incompatible—Friendship exciting fortitude—Providence defended—A safe haven.

Dear Stormont,

I FEEL for you from the bottom of my heart, and sincerely wish that my participation of your sorrow could alleviate it. Feeling as you do, I acknowledge that your misfortune is one of the heaviest that can befal a man. You have unhappily too great a degree of sensibility: with most other men the poison of the calamity would be accompanied with its antidote; for it is hardly credible that a woman who evinces such depravity, who breaks through every tie not only of affection, but of morality and religion, should fail to raise that disgust and contempt, by which love and regret are banished from the heart. I allow for the habits of attachment even to inanimate things; but where vice, and crime, and folly stare us in the face, can we embrace them, although they assume the outward form of angels? Were I, Stormont, to propose murder or treason to you, would my friendship be as dear to you as I am pleased to think it is at present? Is it then merely the fascination of personal charms? Good Heaven! the fable of the sculptor and his

statue is more natural; for the beauties he had bestowed upon it, if they wanted the addition of animation, were at least not blasted with the taint of depravity. Recover yourself, my dear friend; let the letter which you enclosed to me, and which I return, assist to cure you of this unmanly distemper. How could you read it, and continue to regret the being that wrote it? Can you hear her call corruption nature, and love her still?

Forgive me, Stormont, if my language appear rough to you, but yours is a malady that must not be soothed. I pity your sensibility, but I call upon your good sense, your honour, your religion, to resist melancholy, the attacks of which you seem to be yielding to without opposition, and with an unmanly depression. I am rejoiced to find that, severely as you feel this trial, rage, revenge, and suicide are foreign to your soul; they are the passions and resources of barbarians and fools: but, on the other hand, remember that weak fondness and despondency are unworthy of you.

This, my dear Stormont, is not a moment to look back, nor would I suggest aught that could add to the painful reflections of your mind; but when, in blessing my Julia and me, you seem to charge Heaven with depriving you of happiness, I must say that your misfortune, even if directed by Providence, appears to me but the natural result of an inconsiderate passion and a hasty marriage. Oh! that I could make you see it in that light! that I could but hear you say—"'Tis true; I thought not "of virtue or intellect when my infatuated senses "hurried me to the altar to call upon the Deity "to sanction a union in which the soul had never "been considered: it is but just I should atone; I "submit to the expiation; I will not sink."

I admire and approve your determination not to

keep her fortune, but I could wish the return of it accompanied by a divorce. I urged this to you before you left town with her, and may now repeat it with double weight. Think of this, dear Stormont; and, instead of quitting England, repair to the Elms, where the arms of friendship will be open to receive you. Come, and fix the anchor of your hope in a haven safe from the tempests of the world. Julia unites with me in the request. Come, and, depend upon it, we will heal your wound.

LETTER XXXVI.

MISS COVERLEY TO PERCIVAL.

An heiress discontented with the advantages of her fortune.

I AM truly fortunate in having such a friend. Your language is kind, you condescend to reason with me as a rational creature, and you adopt the only mode that could ever be attended with conviction to me. Lady Duberley's manners to me are little calculated to skreen her folly from my contempt. If I advance a sentiment, she inveighs against it with an acrimony that rouses my spirit to rebel; and when I defend my sentiment with argument, she sneers at the logic of a Miss in her teens.

But it is not of my aunt alone I have to complain: I declare I am scarcely acquainted with a rational creature, or at least with any that are disposed to admit me of the number; and were it not for Lord Digby, to whom I have been lately introduced, I believe I should lose the use of my tongue. He is a good creature, and hears what I have to

say about this world that I am sent into. He very often approves too of the light in which I see things. He is a great comfort to me, and I trust will stay here as long as we do. From him I have learned that St. Valeri is actually in England: he crossed the channel in the same packet, and immediately set out for London with his friend Monsieur ——, whom I remember at Paris, and in whose flight from the mob the Chevalier has become his companion through friendship.

I expect to get intelligence of St. Valeri through Lord Digby; if I do, I shall open my mind to you on all my intentions, and consult you as the friend on whom I place the highest dependence. Your sentiments, your arguments, respecting St. Valeri, are all congenial to my own. Indeed, Mr. Percival, I am sensible of your worth, and feel that you are very dear to me. Surrounded as I am with the pests of creation, I am, in spite of fortune and flattery, a miserable being. I want what I am hopeless of finding; not a mere husband, my friend; of such I have but too many offers to choose from; but I want similar sympathetic minds and hearts. My life is now a mere existence. You do not conceive what I have to encounter. Although apparently surrounded with every comfort and luxury that the world affords, my soul is at this moment depressed with the accumulation of unkindness, injustice, and calumny. In the midst of this, however, it is with delight I reflect that I have so worthy, so exalted a friend as you, which seems to me a compensation beyond my best deservings, and aids hope to support me in the prospect of one day freeing myself from the fetters with which I am bound.

I have already got rid of two Lords and some Commoners, by the freedom of my sentiments on

marriage; but I find the greater number of my admirers inclined to encounter all my follies and singularities. What a detestable god is money! would to heaven I had been born to a cottage, and three hundred pounds a-year! I am now called to associate with people who I know are my enemies, and whose society I am forced to endure. Would I were at the Elms! there I know I have an invaluable, exhaustless comfort—a friend. And such a friend! one possessing all that can gratify the soul of any being not dead to every noble feeling. Forgive the warmth with which I express myself; I cannot speak coldly to one I love, and surely I need not tell you that I love you better than any man existing: but my love is a compound of admiration and perfect esteem, consequently of the purest nature. Oh! may you long enjoy the happiness you possess and deserve in your Julia! She is the most blessed of women: and Providence has brought you together to show what marriage ought to be; I will not say, what it is. Again I repeat, may you be happy! and, as for me, I must find some way of putting it out of the power of fortune to make me miserable. Such as I find the world I wish not to remain in it. Adieu!

LETTER XXXVII.

PERCIVAL TO MISS COVERLEY.

Advice.

You will now soon find the Chevalier. When you do I shall expect to have speedy intelligence of

it. You stand upon a precipice, and I tremble for you. The unhappiness you feel under your aunt heightens your danger. I am sorry you do not give sufficient attention to the sentiments with which I would fain inspire you, but that you incline rather to cherish unhappy sensations than to take the draughts of philosophy I prescribe. How can you be so wanting to yourself and to friendship, as to express, as to give birth to a thought of not remaining in this world? For shame! you have a brilliant post assigned you, and before you have entered upon it, you suffer the little impatiences of your heart to lead you to talk of relinquishing it, as if it were not well worth enduring a temporary subordination, call it mortification, to be able to run a career which you have it in your power to make glorious. I will grieve for the slightest and shortest of your evils, but I would fain render you superior to the heaviest and longest that could possibly attack you.

Believe me, that disappointments are whets to wisdom, and sharpen the mind to a relish of happiness, as certain bitters excite the stomach to its food. Do not suffer your spirit to be worried unworthily, but fix your happiness as much as you can beyond the power of others to hurt: fix it on yourself. I mean not basely, but in the acquisition of self-approbation; for self-approbation draws along with it the approbation of all the higher ranks of being, who from their invisible stations are permitted to look on, and be interested, perhaps, to participate in the thoughts, words, and actions of mankind, and all the events consequent upon them. Set about arranging the plan of your future life, fixing unalterable principles for your conduct, and make yourself happy in the contemplation of pass-

ing a noble portion of existence within the boundary of life.

You are very young, my dear friend, and must not be angry at my saying that you have yet many principles to fix, which is indeed the business of many an older philosopher than yourself. Our feelings are to be examined by reason; the better ones encouraged and made principles, the rest subdued and rooted out, for this is the nature of such a creature as man. For example; you feel yourself vexed and mortified at indelicacy of treatment, and calumny: you do not deserve them; is it then reasonable to be unhappy at incivilities we do not merit? certainly not; make it therefore a maxim that *we should not be affected, or slightly, by the erroneous conduct of others.* Again; you feel impatient to burst from indignities, though temporary: but what are the consequences? You must break from those to whom the laws of your country have bound you; and whom, whatever be their foibles, nature and habit have planted deep in your affection: hence draw this principle, *that we ought to bear with fortitude and serenity, evils that are not to be avoided but by losing good.* In this manner may you extract principles from every thing passing about you.

I see that you and Lady Duberley are of very dissimilar dispositions: but you must avoid a rupture; and pray consider how much all your friends would be affected by your taking any hasty step. Let me inspire you with that angelic patience that masters the present moment and turns even pain and sorrow to advantage; with that self-possession which raises some above the generality of the species, and makes them look with indifference on the little things which toss common souls in the furious tempests of the passions. The great secret and most valuable art of philosophy, is to teach us to

become masters of our own happiness, independent of the external agitations around us. Do you ask for the means? Apply to your books: study nature, and particularly yourself. Investigate your feelings, your passions, your faculties, your virtues, and, if you have any, your vices. Then what a prospect before you! the affluence you are about to possess, if it allure some base and interested souls, will probably lead some good ones to your shrine; distinguish, choose, and be happy. Year after year may flow on, full of natural, amiable, and philosophical enjoyments, and the fund of knowledge that you will increase as you go along, will ripen in you the desire and belief of higher bliss, which, when time shall have established your habits, will lead you to the resignation of this life with calmness and with hope. Are not these reflections powerful aids to your passing your present moments not only with patience, but with lively and delightful anticipation? Is this merely a rhapsody? I should be sorry either you or I thought so. Remember to cherish patience. Adieu!

LETTER XXXVIII.

MISS COVERLEY TO PERCIVAL.

An odd question.

"DISTINGUISH, choose, and be happy."—Alas! my dear friend, the difficulty of distinguishing confounds the power of choice, and renders it a thousand to one against happiness. You have yourself allowed that I shall not easily know the lover of my person from the lover of my fortune.

I thank you for your letter, it is written like yourself. Your sentiments are good, your principles are pure, and your actions prove your sincerity. I too, Percival, am in love with virtue; and had it been my lot to ———I say that virtue has my fullest admiration, my friend; but, perhaps, from my situation, I have formed some eccentric notions—they will not, I fear they will not, meet your approbation: indeed they are totally inconsistent with some part of the world's essentials of virtue. How shall I dare to tell you what has entered this brain of mine? The prejudices of education will operate against me. Although you disapprove, do not hate me; for I feel myself impelled to write freely to you, but I tremble for our friendship, while I open the secret of my heart—*Why should I be bound to any man* FOR LIFE?

I will write on: while my letter is in my possession the thoughts I insert in it are still confined to me: I will send it or not as I shall feel impelled at its conclusion.

You know my opinion of fortune too well to imagine that I would not gladly give it up on any noble occasion: but shall I run the risk of giving both that and myself into the hands of a villain or a fool? Does not the marriage ceremony generally make people slaves and villains? What need have noble minds of it? It can have no good influence on the heart, but can hardly fail of breeding discontent and dissension in all who feel their *natural independence.* However politic or useful the institution may be for the vulgar, to the refined and rational part of mankind it must appear a ridiculous and cruel tax upon *their happiness, their liberty, the free choice of their pursuits, and the enjoyments of their existence.* Are love, mutual confidence, and esteem, incompatible with freedom? See the difference: according to my

plan, I should be perfect mistress of my wishes, my hopes, and my pursuits, without being obliged to any being for permission. Possessed of an ample fortune, animated with the ardour of youth, and the love of virtue, and divested of fear and of suspicion, I should run a glorious career, and finish my course with the pleasing reflection of having served the purposes for which I was placed here, and enjoyed the being bestowed upon me for enjoyment: whereas admit the ceremonials, and I am tied down by the laws of the country to another, obliged to follow his course and give into his views; to adopt modes of life I abhor; to pass an existence of contention, and to die in disgust. When I look forward I shudder at the prospect, and have horrid presages. Yet why, when my mind is just and my object honourable, should I feel this oppression?

I could write volumes on the subject, but I will pursue it no farther, till I hear something from you upon it. Let your calm and friendly pen direct my faculties; but write, I beseech you, from the dictates of your own noble understanding, and have no recourse to stale notions and trite catechisms, with a mistaken desire of leading me into doctrines of religion, and systems of morality, merely because they are established by the laws of the country. Let me hear from you soon. You have subject enough for a long sermon: spare, however, the chapter and verse if you please, and send me a friendly, reasonable letter. Good night!

LETTER XXXIX.

PERCIVAL TO MISS COVERLEY.

Marriage.

Your letter does indeed open a world of matter for discussion: a large volume would not contain all that might be said on what you have written. I am unequal to the task, but I have your welfare at heart too sincerely to elude the investigation of subjects, the right understanding of which is so essential to it. The questions arising from your reasoning extend farther than you are aware of, and involve the most serious topics. Were I to enter fully into them you would unavoidably find many common-place arguments, but remember that truths are not less true because they are common. Believe me, whatever I write, whether it be the result of education, or the conviction of my reason, will ever be written with the utmost sincerity, and with no mistaken desire of leading you into doctrines of religion, and systems of morality, merely because they are established by the laws of the country. Poor is the foundation of the religion and morals which are built on politics. If we cannot erect them on better ground, even let them go at once, and let us scramble as we can for the few pleasures we find scattered in our way.

But, policy out of the question, reason, sound reason, will guide us to a knowledge, not complete indeed, but sufficient to regulate our sentiments and actions. Have you thoroughly examined the nature of your being? why you exist? to what end you are formed? Until you have rightly settled these questions, it is not possible to obtain a just resolution of the great question you have put. Can

you review your mind and person without wonder? Does not the latter convince you that you are placed at the head of animal creation? and the former that you are related to a much superior order of beings? Is not the end of your existence to purify, to instruct, to enlarge, to ennoble your nature, to exalt yourself? in a word, to form the soul? For this are we born, and upon ourselves does it depend to mingle with celestial spirits, or grovel with the herd.

Marriage is a blessing or a curse, according to the sympathy or antipathy of those united by it: but you have imbibed a wrong notion of the word *independence* when you talk of *natural* independence. It is a mere political word, and has nothing to do with nature, which is itself a regular chain of dependence, of being upon being, effect upon cause, and all upon the first great cause. That person holds an independent state, whose situation exempts him from submitting to the depraved or unreasonable will of another; but notwithstanding this, the greatest of our comforts and enjoyments spring from dependencies, and there is no situation which ought to exempt us from submitting to that will, which is the result of reason. I do not consider marriage as including the subjugation of a woman to a man, but as a state of unbounded love, unbounded confidence, in which all submission should be to reason or to love. To reason it should be; but if ever it be doubtful where reason rests, a woman knows little how to manage her sex's power if she cannot bring the question to the tribunal of love, and, of course, who cannot triumph where she ought.

Then, as to having *the free choice of the pursuits and enjoyments of your existence*, the same argument holds. It does not depend upon marriage, but upon reason to restrict that choice. Where reasonable

it cannot be opposed, for still I have in view a husband, and not a tyrant. He who assumes power because marriage gives it, is a tyrant. Miserable must be the lot of her, who, in taking the title of wife, finds herself a slave: but call not such a state marriage. Oh! my friend, marriage is, and I speak it from a blessed experience, the summit of human felicity: but hearts must be united; self-love must give place to, or be more gratified with, that supreme affection, that ineffable love, which makes the happiness of its object our own, and even leads us to suffer pain if it but procure us the satisfaction of giving joy to the person we love. This is the delightful state of love and marriage, and it is too real a bliss for me to allow it to be a delirium, a mere honeymoon.

But let us suppose, what is too often the case, that marriage is formed where this bliss is from several causes unattainable; where tempers are discordant, and continued intercourse satiates; where mind, without which love, as a mental passion, cannot be supported, is deficient. In such cases what is to be done? Shall we consider it as a ridiculous tax upon our happiness, our liberty, and our free choice?—In resigning that freedom of choice, great caution should be observed; but once resigned, a vile selfishness must predominate over that female who, in resentment to a man, can overcome all the other glorious considerations that should charm her to a domestic life. Exclusive, then, of those transports enjoyed by the fortunate, consider marriage as the basis of every domestic resource. It is the soil of happiness; and though one spot prove barren, many may be fruitful. The mother, the mistress, the friend, the neighbour, the benefactor, have here their highest cultivation: and if unhappily the conduct of husband and wife cannot spring from its best

source, the reciprocity of love, surely good sense may teach the necessity of supplying its place with the attainment of other joys, and the performance of other duties; joys and duties that are unattainable in your scheme: a scheme that perhaps shot out at once from the union of a warm imagination and a love of virtue.

In the first place, you know not with what fondness you will love the being you shall give birth to; how anxious you will be for its happiness, how solicitous to plant in its bosom all that is virtuous and amiable. The system you have imagined as so felicitous would blast this fairest hope: you cast an unmerited odium on your children, who, if they prove too wise and gentle to curse, would sigh, and wish their mother had been pure. Here then you poison the mother's joys. Next as a mistress: depend upon it, however strongly attached we may be to our taste and sentiments, there are general rules by which mankind will be guided. Servants and dependents find, or ought to find, much happiness flowing to them from the conduct of their employers; and if they see their mistress deviating from the chief rule of her sex, they will fail both in respect and affection; and they will serve for money, not for love. Thus another of the sources of domestic satisfaction is contaminated. Would friendship hold? If esteem be one of its ingredients, consider that the latitude of your scheme undermines the very foundation of it. I do not say that there are not instances where a woman has preserved her friendships with our sex, after she has relinquished them with her own; but I confess I think it rather among possibilities than probabilities. As for neighbourhood, that, you know, must be totally given up: and thus, you see, your plan, however philosophical it appeared to you, falls and becomes unphilosophical in lop-

ping away the branches of happy existence. But of existence—may I sermonize a little? or rather, will you cast that solemn epithet on the sincerity with which I wish to lead you to the real knowledge of yourself, and to make you esteem all that passes here but secondary to your true happiness? I do not agree with the poet who says; "Man never is, but "always to be blest." No; life is strewed with blessings; we are surrounded with flowers: let us enjoy the fragrance as we pass through the garden, let us gather nosegays and garlands: but let us not mistake and stop to collect pernicious weeds, however alluring they flower to the eye. Let us give to the charge of memory only such sentiments and actions as may hereafter prove sources of triumph and of comfort to our minds. Remember that memory begins a faint immortality, and that it becomes, in the course of years, an everlasting fountain of pleasure or of pain. Submit awhile to be guided in the first stage of youth, and you will bless your moderation and your friend, when your reflection attains that maturity which will force from you an acknowledgment that marriage is a holy, sacred institution. Banish from your mind the erroneous ideas that have taken possession of it, and lay not the foundations of lasting misery. Be assured, my dear friend, that there are men worthy to be entrusted with your confidence, your happiness, your independence, if you choose to call happiness by that name; men, who in marriage seek love and society, not command and tyranny; and who can give to mutual dependence a zest, a sweetness, infinitely superior to all that the imaginary charms of freedom can bestow. Think; then write to me, and let me have the joy of finding that my reasoning has converted you from a persuasion so dangerous to virtue and to happiness. Heaven protect and guide you!

LETTER XL.

MISS COVERLEY TO PERCIVAL.

St. Valeri found.

YOUR defence of marriage is strong. It could not to reason have been taken up in stronger points of view: the mother, the mistress, the neighbour, are irresistible testimonies in its favour, according to the present system of things. But it is of that system I arraign the rationality: yet as it does prevail, I fear it would be the reverse of wisdom to forego the degrees of comfort it offers. Still I feel freedom of thought and action essential to the enjoyments of life; and although I allow that in a certain degree all things are dependent, there is in all less or more restraint. But I must think more of this; and in the meantime I trust I have not debased myself in your opinion. Be assured that the love of virtue is a principle within me, and I beg you to consider my observations as objections to what I think constitute her trammels, not as attacks upon her essence.

I have seen St. Valeri. I had scarcely read your letter when Lord Digby entered the room, and presented him to me, saying—"Miss Coverley, I bring "you an old acquaintance." He kissed my hand with his former ardour, and I own I felt a pleasure; but not of the sort that bespeaks such a passion as you term love. I do not think well enough of St. Valeri so to love him. He had no opportunity of repeating his passion, for Lady Duberley followed him in almost immediately, and her reception of him was far from being the most encouraging; which did not escape the penetrating eye of Lord Digby. St. Valeri was on his return to Paris, but having met

friends here, he purposes to make some stay in England.

I was here interrupted by my aunt, and a pretty lecture I have received from her. My reception of the Chevalier was just the reverse of hers, for I was determined to preserve the balance equal, and make my smiles keep pace with her frowns. This enraged her to such excess, that having smothered her choler before Lord Digby, she hastened to vent it upon me. Her tyranny has never risen to this pitch before, and it has so completely disgusted me, that if I could be foolish enough to marry in spite, it might possibly be the means of accelerating my *wrong step;* I mean matrimony, honest matrimony; for a wrong step it will be with me, marry when I will. Lady Duberley intends to leave Brighthelmstone this week, and to hurry me away with her. You shall hear from me soon again; in the meantime do not write till I send you word where I shall be. Oh! Percival! why am I to be doomed, at this period of my existence, to the frowns and control of a silly old woman? You may tell me that in three years I shall be mistress of myself. Three years! I could be half the world over in that time, have seen a thousand places, done a thousand things, gained a thousand new ideas: and, oh! for a *compagnon de voyage* like—— him whose like I shall never look upon. The imagination, with all its pleasures, is a dangerous faculty. We form pictures by it, and become wretched in not being able to realize them: mine is playing me a trick, from which an eccentric flight, at this moment, might save me. Adieu! I foresee a life of misery. Keep, I beseech you, the secret of my opinion respecting marriage: I will adopt yours, and, as long as I live, endeavour to preserve my *legal title* to happiness. Oh! Percival! why—but I will say no more. God bless you!

LETTER XLI.

FREDERICK STORMONT TO PERCIVAL.

A victim of the heart.

THINK me not, dear Percival, insensible either to the affectionate friendship or sound reasoning of your letter. Were my mind less dependent on my nerves, I would obey your summons; I would fly to the Elms; I would cast off the gloom that fastens on my spirits: but while my understanding is convinced, this sad rebellious frame defies its authority, and delivers me up to useless and unmanly sorrow. I see but one step that offers a hope: that, however, is not to infect the happy mansion of a Percival and his Julia; it is to seek an honourable death in an honourable cause.

Adieu, my friend; when you receive this, I shall be on the sea, or in a foreign country. I mean to offer my services to the Austrian General in the Low Countries. If death avoid me, change of place and of scene, the tumult of armies, and perhaps the loss of blood, may effect what reason cannot. You shall hear from me in the course of a little time. I will inform you, if I live, of whatever befals me; and if a hope arise in my mind of a conquest over my heart, I will not withhold it. Once more adieu! and may your merited blessings continue uninterrupted through life!

LETTER XLII.

LORD DIGBY TO PHILIP TOWERS.

A blue-eyed beauty—A character.

THANKS, dear Philip, for your letters, particularly for the long one from the Elms. The festivities, the disposal of Percival's income, the anecdotes, the usury of kisses, are all rich treats.

I have been chiefly at Brighton since my last; detained, not by the sea-side butterflies whom a man of a few years' experience soon classes in their genera and species, and tires of reviewing, but by the young beauty for whom you enquire, and whom it will puzzle our philosophy to class in any species. In her person she is above the middle size, slight, well-formed, and graceful; her complexion is fair, her countenance animated and marked, her lips are formed for smiles which they usually wear, her brows, on the other hand, are pliant, and I have seen them clothed with a frown that has petrified its object, and that might awe the boldest heart. She has fine light hair which waves luxuriantly round her forehead and temples; her eyes are blue, her nose the Grecian, her teeth are white and well set, and her chin terminates an oval contour. Methinks you say, "all this is but a selection of fine features, "and the association will suit a hundred other beau-"ties." True, Towers; and what else are all the descriptions of any subject, animate or inanimate, but a collection of general ideas which the senses alone can affix to individual objects? And to what amount all the embellishments of words in the praise of beauty? What are all the enchantresses of lovers' eyes to the contemplator of description,

but beings of his own imagination, a new creation, so little like the original, that compared they never would be known for each other? In vain does language invade the province of the pencil; fictitious charms are all it can produce; truth stands aloof, and he who delineates the person may consider himself as writing romance, addressing the fancy of his correspondent, and seducing it into a combination against reality; seducing it into a combination of features and limbs, gratifying to the faculty of invention, but by which it would never be led to the person.

Instead then of running into nicer shades, descriptive of Miss Coverley's form, I will endeavour to catch for you as much of the character of her mind as I can, which is no easy task; for although mental characteristics be within the dominion of language, hers are so unlike other traits, that it almost requires new words to draw them. She has a masculine inflexibility that will not be satisfied to take custom for reason. From a union of desultory reading and conversation, she has formed peculiar notions of vice and virtue, and she does not scruple to proclaim where they differ from established opinions. She is by no means tinctured with the rage for equality as a political principle, but in polite society she is for throwing down all the barriers of rank and fortune, and placing wits before Lords. She not only says it should be so, but frequently, to the dismay of her old aunt, practises her doctrine, by forcing commoners to sit above her at table, and seating peers below her. She says, the only rank required in company is that of a gentleman, the idea of which admits of no gradation; but she does not dispute the utility of ranks in the forms of government, though very much inclined to quarrel with the use generally made of them. She compares

rank in company to children's play, whereas equality is the essence of it; but equality in government she compares to the level of the ocean which is at the mercy of the winds, whereas the distinction of ranks is the firm earth of which the acclivities and declivities, the hills and the valleys, ensure the verdure, fertility, and beauty. She declaims against the restraints imposed upon women, who are seldom allowed to judge or to act for themselves; and I almost question whether the distinguishing virtue of her sex be not included in her protest. She has, at least, to the utter amazement of sober matrons, and modest maidens, dared to defend some imprudent females, and to declare, in her eccentric way, that all the virtues are not wrapped up in one, with which they are necessarily to sink.

She never appears out of fashion, yet without copying any body, for she has an art of rendering every mode peculiarly hers. She makes no pretension to knowledge; and though she requires reasoning from others because she can reason herself, she affects to talk from sentiment, while she courts conviction and instruction. She has great readiness in catching ridiculous points, and tells ludicrous anecdotes with humour, painting rather than relating circumstances, but accurately and briefly so as never to tire. I ventured to hint to her that this was a talent by which she would probably make enemies and lose friends. "That," said she, "has already been the "case; but what can I do, if people will be absurd? "I am never offended when others rally me on my "peculiarities with good humour; I am only angry "when affected wisdom would frighten my under-"standing by barking; just as a shepherd's dog "keeps the flock in one track. I have my faults, "no doubt, and to pleasant raillery I have no ob-"jection. It is only by that, or friendly reasoning,

"I can ever be made sensible of them." In setting her face against the prejudices of the world, she is in danger of contracting counter-prejudices, and of running into contrary extremes. She concludes from the rarity of that species of noble love which springs from the union of esteem and taste, that it is not natural, but a passion forced by the artificial warmth of education; forgetting that education is congenial to the human race, and that quality, not quantity, discriminates the nature of things. She says, that the thought is very fine, but requires such superabundant merit on both sides, that if no match were good without it, ninety-nine marriages out of a hundred would be set aside: whereas merit had nothing to do with the common passion of love, which proceeded from peculiar turns of imagination, as was proved by all the couples she had ever met.

I am mistaken if she does not reason from her own feelings, and if she is not on the point of acting upon this reasoning. She has taken a fancy to a young man whom she does not respect, and whom for two reasons I wish she would not marry: the one is for her own sake, as I foresee her ruin in it; and the other, because I was the means of Lady Duberley's receiving him. I mean the young Frenchman who crossed the channel in the same packet-boat with me from Dieppe.

St. Valeri has a fine person and a pleasing countenance; he is sprightly too, as far as volubility is concerned, but his understanding I find is shallow; and I am clear that the girl's wealth is her greatest charm in his eye; perhaps, with all her beauty, her only one; for in the heart of a successless gambler there is no room for love, nor in his imagination either, according to her doctrine. The reparation of his losses, the retrieving his fortune, the obtaining resources to gratify the ruling passion, are the

springs of his imagination, and the predominant incitements of his heart. St. Valeri, in short, proves to be a man of fashion and a ruined gamester. His gallantries to Miss Coverley while she was in Paris, and his expressive eyes, have given that turn to her imagination, which renders merit of no account, and it has not been in the power of any of the host of her suitors to vary that turn; which is the more singular, as she allows that constancy is not an attendant of the passion that is produced by imagination.

Although not deficient of a reasonable share of self-approbation, her penetration is too keen to be obstructed by vanity; she detects the views of her admirers; of those at least that remain: for the freedom of her sentiments has driven away more than one who would have been worthy of her and of her fortune. No wonder then that the contempt or indignation excited by her opinion of the pretenders to her heart, should leave her imagination open to first impressions, and incline her to give St. Valeri the preference. He has been here a very little while, but has made good use of his time and of her prepossession.

I like this young creature; and her very singularities, as I have no intention of being a candidate for her *turn of imagination*, interest me for her. I have therefore hinted caution and time to her, but I have not dared to utter a word of my opinion of St. Valeri, lest it should happen to me as it did to our friend Heywood, whom Fanny Beverley consulted on the character of Captain Lovemore. Heywood, with conscientious accuracy, represented Lovemore as a ruined man, a broken down debauchee, whose temper was imperious, and who, in short, was a being every way unfit to render a woman happy. Fanny thanked him and went away; but returned in the evening to beg a very particular favour. What was it?

That he would, as her own father was dead, take his part at Church, and give her away, for she had promised, and should despise herself for a jilt if she did not give her hand to the Captain.

I am interrupted; I will resume my pen soon. Adieu!

LETTER XLIII.

LORD DIGBY TO PHILIP TOWERS.

Characters—Lord Chopstone—Mr. Lightless—An argument —A confidential confession.

THIS extraordinary girl! She will be lost, Towers; and that weak woman her aunt has been hastening the period. While I was writing to you St. Valeri called to tell me that Miss Coverley requested me to be at Lady Duberley's in the evening, and I went.

I found a number of beaux about her: among others our acquaintance Chopstone, who arrived at Brighton last night, and young Lightless, the son of Lord V—, a man the very reverse of Lord Chopstone; one who conceives and speaks at random, and who, far from syllogizing an opinion, gives it up the moment it is opposed, though in so doing he often exchanges a just for an erroneous one. He constantly introduces his observations with—"Somehow, I don't know how, but it strikes "me—" and gives them up with "Now I think "on't again."—When I entered the room Miss Coverley was playing off these two characters. Having recognized me with a friendly nod, she continued amusing herself with them. Their subject was the revolution. "How will it end?" said she. —"Somehow, I don't know how, but it strikes

"me," said Lightless, "that it won't end here. "The princes and nobility will never remain quiet "and satisfied."—"Why not?" replied Chopstone; "they ought to be satisfied, and it is their interest "to remain quiet."—"You will find it difficult, my "Lord," said Miss Coverley, "to prove your as- "sertion. Ought men to be satisfied with losses? "and is it their interest to abandon their rights with- "out a struggle?"—"You alter my proposition," rejoined his Lordship: "I undertake to demon- "strate that they have had no losses, and that their "rights were wrongs."—"Do you mean," said she, "to argue that—?"—"Certainly," cried he, without stopping to hear what she was going to say; "my position is, that right cannot be con- "sistent with oppression."—"But there may be "rights without oppression," said Miss Coverley. "Understand me," said he coarsely; "it is impos- "sible to argue without agreeing upon data, and if "you stop me in the midst of my argument we "shall never come to the conclusion."—"Now "then, my Lord, go on, and prove that to lose "is not to lose, and that right is wrong."

Without perceiving that she was laughing, Chop- stone went on with his logic. "Right cannot be "consistent with oppression: the bulk of the French "nation have hitherto been considered as little "more than the slaves of the higher orders; the "whole train of feudal rights, the immunities, the "tenures, the monstrous claims of the clergy and "of the nobility, are all so many long-dated rob- "beries committed upon the third order; there- "fore the recovery by the people cannot be ac- "counted a loss to the inheritors of unjust acquisi- "tions; and upon this principle, I maintain that "they ought to rest satisfied."—"Now I think "on't again," cried Lightless, "so they ought."

—" And I equally maintain," continued Chopstone, " that it is their interest to remain quiet."—" Or " you infer," said Miss Coverley, interrupting him, " that they will have a troublesome life; nothing " can be clearer. Pray, Mr. Lightless, support " the argument, or it will drop: counterprove to " Lord Chopstone that the robberies are on the " side of the tiers-etat, and do not give up the " day so soon." Lightless smiled, and said, " he " thought somehow, he did not know how, but it " struck him, that Lord Digby could refute Chop- " stone."

I said it might be argued, that the robbery was committed by those who abolished the feudal rights, on this ground; that the land originally belonged to the ancestors of the Lords, who had generously bestowed them on the farmers on very easy conditions, some personal services, and a petty rent. " Now " I think on't again," said Lightless, " the tiers- " etat are certainly the robbers."—" I say no," vociferated Chopstone. " Suppose," said I, " the " tenants who hold common leases under any land- " holder, should on his death claim the privilege of " not paying rent to the heir."—" The cases are " widely different," replied he; " services are " downright slavery; now I lay it down as a princi- " ple, that no man can contract for the slavery of " his posterity: but leases are voluntary agreements. " The deduction is demonstration itself, and stands " logically thus: No man has a right to engage for " the personal services of another without his con- " sent, but every man may grant leases of his " estates; the vassals of the Lords contracted for " personal services, leaseholders only receive estates " for a certain term of years; *ergo* it is as clear as " the sun that vassals are not leaseholders." Willing to amuse Miss Coverley, I did not give Chop-

stone so speedy a triumph, and assuming his own logical tone: "Argue the point thus, my Lord," said I; "Feuds were grants of land for life, or in-"heritable, to be holden on certain conditions: "leases are in fact grants of land for years, to be "held also on certain conditions: now if a lease-"holder be bound to pay his rent or restore the "land, *à fortiori*, *feudatories*, whose rents are "scarcely more than nominal, and whose services "are too slight to deserve the name of slavery, are "bound to perform the conditions, or, if they "really find themselves slaves, to resign the estates "altogether to the heirs of the grantors."—"Ab-"surd!" bellowed Chopstone; "the argument is "quite absurd! Lord Digby cannot be serious. He "knows well the origin of these estates; that they "were conquered lands parcelled out by chief-"tains to support a military system, and when that "system was changed, or became useless, why "maintain the slavish terms that had arisen out of "it?"—"Nay," said I, "I am not for maintaining "them, I am only for returning the estates to the "heirs of the original grantors; for what right have the "present possessors to them more than every other "man in the nation?"—"Their title," said Chop-stone, with a note of exultation, "is at least as "good as that of the original grantors, whose right "was the result of robbery—."—"*Ergo*," cried Miss Coverley, helping the debate with a laugh, "the present tenants stand in the light of receivers "of stolen property."—"Now I think on't again, "so they do," said Lightless.—"I deny it," replied Chopstone. "Come, Mr. Lightless," said Miss Coverley, "you affirm, and Lord Chopstone "denies: the argument now lies between you and "him."—"Somehow, I don't know how, but it "strikes me, my Lord," said Lightless to Chop-

stone, " that he who receives what a robber has " stolen, is a receiver of stolen property."—" Granted," said his Lordship; " now go on, make " your inference, and when you have done, I will " answer you."—" My inference is very simple," rejoined Lightless; " only this that the receiver " is as bad as the thief."—" Well inferred," cried Miss Coverley, laughing. " Have you done?" said Chopstone. Lightless smiled, and bowed. " In " the first place then," continued Chopstone, " it is " necessary to define the ideas attached to the " words, *receiver of stolen property*. I assert that " secrecy is essential in the definition; now the fol- " lowers of the Lords received the feuds openly " from the hands of the conquerors, *ergo*, feudato- " ries do not stand in the light of receivers of stolen " property."—" What say you to that?" said Miss Coverley to Lightless. " Now I think on't again," answered he, " Lord Chopstone's argument is very " strong, very strong."—" But," said Miss Cover- ley, imitating Lightless with that nice colouring with which she veils her satire, and which was in- visible to him, " I don't know, but it strikes me, " that committing a crime openly will not give a " right, though it may alter a definition."—" You " shift the ground of argument, my dear Madam," cried Chopstone; " but I will prove on your own " grounds, that the Lords have reasonably no right " to feel themselves aggrieved."

Having thus given fresh fuel to his Lordship's passion for argument, she amused herself sometime longer, alternately taking his tone and Lightless's, opposing the former with absurd objections which it was ridiculous to obviate, and giving the latter new ideas when he came in turn *to think on it again*. It would run my letter to too great a length, my dear Philip, to continue detailing the scene: Chopstone

went on arguing for arguing sake; and his reasoning at length tended towards an agrarian law; for not knowing on what ground to leave the lands, unfettered by the original conditions, in the possession of the tenants, he very consistently suspected the right to be in the people at large. An absurd and destructive conclusion. You know my opinion, Towers; surely it was intended that all men should have a share of the comforts of life; but if this proves really otherwise, it is not to a levelling principle we must look for a remedy for the evil; for, as Lightless says, *somehow it strikes me*, that individual distinction is productive of general good; at least it ought to be so, and upon no other principle am I an advocate for it.

A fracas on the Steyne having drawn the company to the windows, Miss Coverley remained alone with me. "I wish to speak you," said she, "and "I fear I shall have no other opportunity. Lady "Duberley leaves Brighton to-morrow. Although "you see me trifling with these motley characters "for amusement, I have a heavy heart: my fate is "a wayward one."—"What!" said I, "the ob-"ject of admiration and of love, and blessed with "the brightest prospects, yet complain of your "fate!"—"The object of admiration! say rather "the object of terror; and as to what are esteemed "my prospects, they hold no place in my imagina-"tion, which has long dwelt on ideal happiness, or "air-built castles, that must be driven from it to "make way for customary follies and solid chains." A tear started to her eye: she walked slowly into the next room, the door of which was open, and I followed her. "My dear Lord Digby," said she, "the world and I can never accord. It requires "too much, and Nature has moulded my heart to "rebel against its tyranny. I do not complain of

" my aunt, or the other people who have been " trained from their cradles to sacrifice real to ficti- " tious happiness; but I lament that my eccentric " imaginations devote me to disapprobation, deser- " tion, and misery. I am determined to act for " myself, and I mean to marry St. Valeri, who has " proposed himself to me. I think I am less likely " to make him wretched than any Englishman. " You may imagine I hardly hope a concurrence of " opinion from my guardians, yet their consent " would remove difficulties, which, if they must oc- " cur, I am resolved to surmount. You are inti- " mately acquainted with Sir William Oldham, my " principal guardian: a word from you would have " great weight with him. I call him my principal " guardian, because the other, Mr. Sanderson, a " good-natured easy man, submits to him in every " thing, and considers himself more as a trustee of " my father's will than guardian of my person." After assuring her that I was flattered by the con- fidence she reposed in me, I attempted to dissuade her from an immediate marriage. I said it was a very delicate point to speak of St. Valeri. " You " need not scruple to speak your mind," said she, " you cannot offend me; but I will make what is to " you delicate unnecessary. He is a ruined man and " has been a gamester: I know it; but I care not " for fortune, and I believe he will game no more: " I have had some very serious conversations with " him, in which I have candidly laid open my cha- " racter, and convinced him that I was acquainted " with his. My opinions do not alarm him, and he " forswears all manner of gambling." I smiled and shook my head. " Nay, I believe him," continued she; " and besides, if my guardian does not force " me to put too much into his hands, it is, I believe, " in the power of the lawyers to guard against the

" possibility of danger, even if he should return to " dice and cards. Now," added she, " I see you " take me to be a Miss over-head and ears in love, and " ready to do all the foolish things done by other " Misses in the like situation. Be undeceived; I " like St. Valeri well enough to marry him; and I " am the more induced to marry him, because I " never can marry for love. Fate has already re- "moved from my imagination all such hope."— " At the age of eighteen?" cried I, " and with such " charms!"—" You do not understand me," replied she, " nor did I intend you should; but I " speak a truth, and a truth which St. Valeri knows. " He is not dissatisfied with it, and I am perhaps " a more fortunate woman than, upon the whole, I " have had a right to expect for some time past."— I had not time to solve her riddle, or to answer her request of speaking to Sir William, when Lady Duberley and some of the company joined us, and it struck Lightless that I was monopolizing Miss Coverley. Her gaiety, however, did not return; Lightless was struck with a variety of evident remarks to little effect, and Chopstone in vain beat about the bush for an argument. She asked who would put out her harp; when all the beaux running to obey, she found an opportunity to say to me: " Reflect " on what I have asked, and if you find nothing " violently objectionable in it—" I told her it required no thought, for that, if she were determined, a stolen and clandestine marriage would be the greatest evil to her, and on that ground I should certainly argue the point with my friend Sir William. After she had played a few airs, I retired unnoticed. Convinced that she is a determined spirit, I have no doubt that the best step to be taken is to see her property settled, and to let her marry before all the world. By so doing, Oldham will

become the talk and wonder of the day, but he will have secured his ward's fortune; for if she wed St. Valeri without settlements, confusion will ensue. In the first place he is an alien, which will make it necessary to secure her real property in the hands of trustees; and in the next, all her personalty, if he can manage to live without application for it till she is of age, will be at his disposal. Adieu! I will write to you from town.

Ever yours,

DIGBY.

LETTER XLIV.

MISS COVERLEY TO PERCIVAL.

Inconsistency and mystery.

Do not, I beseech you, hate me for the inconsistency that will appear to you in my disposition. My mind becomes more and more agitated: happiness is placed beyond my reach, and I am doomed to substitute fancy for the heart. Even that requires speedy action, or I shall not be able to guide it: I am lost if I hesitate. When you hear what has happened, pity, but do not condemn me. While I reflect upon my solicitation of your counsel, I know I shall appear to you absurd in acting precipitately, perhaps wicked, when you recollect my sentiments. However the motives that actuate me, dear Percival, are such as I assure myself you would approve. Let the mystery that involves my conduct and words suspend your judgment; and oh! think of me with kindness and friendship. Write no more to me at present: I will one day explain to you why I

ask it. Meanwhile adieu! and may every blessing await my noble friend and his happy Julia! Oh! how unlike her fate to that of

EMMA COVERLEY.

LETTER XLV.

JULIA TO MRS. BEVIL.

Happiness attainable—Percival—The danger of misguided imagination—Self-knowledge the great object of education—Infants playing—Anecdote of Henry IV. of France.

YES, my dear mother, happiness is to be found on earth: it is to be secured by those who will take the trouble of enquiring what it is, instead of admitting the first airy phantom that presents itself to the imagination. It is because they know not what happiness is, that so many are miserable. What wonder if they who bend their thoughts upon uncertain and fantastic objects are disappointed! or if they who are not early instructed where to bound their wishes and their hopes, mourn to find them fixed on what is unattainable! I often think that if every girl had such parents as mine, every girl would be as happy. I take no merit to myself: taught as I have been taught, who but must have been sensible of the truths you have impressed on my mind? so guarded, how could chimeras have stolen into a mansion made the repository of reality? Never, my beloved mother, shall I be able to repay the blessings that have resulted from that union of tenderness and judgment with which you have reared your Julia from her earliest years. By these I have been instructed to view only a happiness in reach,

and it is fully mine; if I may so say of what seems constantly increasing.

Edward's character rises more and more in my estimation; his kindness, his attentions, his love in short, are as animated as ever, but his virtue multiplies into endless forms, and is perpetually presenting new points of admiration. If I could wish the slightest alteration in him, it would be, that his sensibility were less keen. Happy in himself, he suffers for others in a very extraordinary degree, and bends all his power to remove every affliction that comes to his knowledge. It is a maxim with him, that fortune is no title to ease, but, on the contrary, that it calls for greater degrees of exertion and activity. He adheres strictly to the arrangement of his income, which he planned on our first meeting at the Elms; but his attentions are not confined to the evils that money can obviate: sympathy, kindness, advice, all the charms of his engaging manners, and the powers of his understanding are exerted to soothe, to encourage, to extricate, and to save the unhappy.

His mind has been chiefly occupied of late on two subjects; the misfortune of his friend Stormont, and his apprehensions for the fate of an eccentric young woman, whose imagination has been left to chance or misguidance, while showy talents and accomplishments have been carefully cultivated; of which the consequence has been natural enough; she has attained more brilliancy than common sense, gained more admirers than friends, and is more likely to err than to act a prudent part in the world: I mean his friend Miss Coverley, who some time ago requested his correspondence and counsel. His solicitude to awaken her reason has been equally noble and candid; but I fear she is one who, in asking advice, means to determine according to her own sense of things. She has broken off her correspond-

ence even more abruptly than she commenced it, and left him to suppose that she is, against his reasoning, about to form a precipitate union with an unprincipled foreigner. I am very sorry for it, for Edward's concern for her had interested me about her, and I had begun to entertain hopes that he would succeed in recovering her mind, which, for want of proper direction, has run into a labyrinth of fancy, where she is likely to remain and perish if she slight the clue offered her by friendship. Oh! how careful should mothers be in the early part of life, of the dear little beings to whom they give birth! To leave the growing mind to shoot at random, or to consign it to the influence of prejudices, is surely to abandon the objects of our affections to a wretched lot. My dear, dear mother, with what respect and admiration do I look back upon the system you pursued! with what gratitude, with what love, do I acknowledge the principles I imbibed from you! with what ardour and maternal care will I impart them to the dear pledges of my Edward's love! Your grandchildren shall be early taught to know themselves: self-knowledge is the great object of education, all else is but secondary; all other attainments conduce in a certain degree to the pleasures of life, but it is self-knowledge that leads to virtue and to happiness. At present my cares for my little Edward and Julia are confined to securing for them a stock of health, and guarding their innocence: they are infants indeed, but I already exercise in thought the plan to be pursued.

They are at this moment in my sight, playing with their aunt Caroline upon the green. With what activity does Edward run round and round his sister, calling Julie, Julie, to encourage her to follow him; while she, unable to articulate, or to move forwards, laughs aloud, and amuses herself with rising and

sitting by the help of Caroline's finger! My favourite moralist says that, "He sees the benevolence of the "Deity more clearly in the pleasures of very young "children, than in any thing in the world." With what delight must parents unite this idea with that of being instruments in the hand of Providence, in assisting the gratuitous enjoyments of their own loved little beings. It is told of Henry IV.; the brave, the noble, amiable Henry of France, that he used frequently to join in the amusements of his children; and that one day, that restorer of his country and peace-maker of Europe being on his hands and knees with the dauphin, his son, on his back, an ambassador suddenly entered the apartment, and surprised him in that attitude. The King, without rising, said to him, "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, have "you any children?"—"Yes, Sire," replied he; "I am glad to hear it," rejoined Henry, "for I "shall now finish my race round the room." If this be amiable in a monarch and a soldier, and who will say he thinks it is not? how must the heart of a mother in private life throb with delight to see domestic tenderness characterize the father of her infants! Edward is a most fond and playful father. I am the happiest of mothers, the happiest of wives, the happiest of daughters. To you and to my father I owe it, and heaven bless you for it! Adieu! The gentlemen have all taken a ride to Woodville, and we do not expect them back till the day after to-morrow.

LETTER XLVI.

JULIA TO MRS. BEVIL.

A perilous adventure—A stranger and his dog—A scene on the margin of a brook under a beech tree—A seraph returning thanks—Farmer Cowper and his dame—Emotion of a domestic—Acknowledgment—Consequences of a dreadful fright—Some account of the stranger—Julia's reflections and wishes.

Oh! my dearest Madam, what a frightful event had nearly taken place! what an escape has our dear Caroline had! thank God! thank God!—I am hardly enough recovered from the terror with which I was struck, to describe to you the cause of it. Having finished my last letter to you, and sent it to the post, I played a little with the children on the turf, then gave them to Catherine to put to bed, and proposed an evening walk to Caroline. The sky was very serene. We strayed out of the grounds; and the beauty of the scenery tempting us on, we lengthened our walk to an unusual distance beyond the village. The sun was setting, and we were in a field admiring the situation of farmer Cowper's cottage, on the little hill near the margin of the river where it winds among the willows, when we were startled by the bellowing of a bull, though we did not see the animal, which was in an adjoining meadow; nor did we perceive any communication, till coming to a gateway, we saw through the opening from which the gate had been removed, the huge creature pawing the ground. Caroline, from an impulse of terror, began to run to the opposite side of the field, where there was a gate. I kept by the side of the same hedge, and fortunately; for I almost immediately got to the corner of it, where there stood a pollard,

up to which some steps had been made: these I ascended, and was calling Caroline back, when I saw the bull enter the field at full speed, and in a direct line after her. I was more dead than alive; but clasping my hands together, I prayed most fervently to the Almighty to save her.

I seemed to pray in vain: as she lost breath, the monster gained ground upon her. At last I saw her fall, and should have fallen myself had not my hope been sustained by the appearance of a man springing over the gate, followed by a dog. Caroline lay within a few yards of him: he had but just time to throw himself in the way, and my senses were so bewildered, that I thought I saw him fall also, till I perceived the bull at some distance from him, and observed him with Caroline lifeless in his arms, getting over the gate. It seems he had taken off his coat and thrown it over the horns of the furious creature, which in an instant struck it to the ground; but he raised his head, and the stranger would inevitably have been the sacrifice of his noble spirit, had not his dog, at the moment that the bull regained his sight, seized him by the heel and clung to it, which drew him off, and made him run bellowing round the pasture. I retained sufficient thought to recollect, that if I could descend on the other side of the hedge, I should be in the same field with Caroline; nor did I find it difficult, as, upon exploring, it proved to be a trodden way. With all the speed my tottering legs could afford, I went towards the gate, but there I found neither Caroline nor her deliverer. The dog, however, was creeping through the bars. It came up and fawned upon me. It was a very beautiful Newfoundland dog. I patted, I embraced him with gratitude. He licked my feet, and wagged his tail, to show how happy he was at what he had done; then looking in my face with

a significant countenance, which said, follow me, he went off at a round rate. The spot I was on was an open pasture, which, on going after the dog, I found closed by degrees into a shady lane, and as it turned, I soon lost sight of him. My agitation was beyond expression, yet I had no doubt that it was the way the stranger had taken, and was soon convinced of it by the return of his dog, with a glove in his mouth: he laid it down before me, then took it up again, and continued with me, walking gently by my side. I was certain his master could not be far before, and was easy as to his character, from the heroic action I had witnessed; but I trembled for Caroline's life, not knowing what effect so terrific a danger might have had: I therefore went forward as fast as I could, half-running, half-walking, and in a few minutes came to a turn from which I saw both her and the stranger on a spot of grass at the margin of a rivulet that ran close to an old beech-tree.

As I approached I found him sitting on the ground, supporting her head on his arm, and sprinkling her face with the water which he raised from the brook with his hand. He called to me as I came nearer, not to be alarmed, for that she breathed, and would now soon come to herself. I never saw a more beautiful youth, and beauty too enlivened by the emanations of a noble action. I blessed him, and I could have embraced him. I sunk down by Caroline, and would have taken her head from his arm, but he prevented me, saying: "You are pale, you "want assistance yourself." Then, without ceremony, he suddenly threw a handful of water into my face. I was indeed on the point of fainting, when the unexpected shock revived me. I blessed him again, for it was not a moment for ceremony, and having collected a little strength, I did what he had forgotten, or did not know was neces-

sary to do, I loosened her clothes, on which she breathed freely, and soon after opened her eyes. She was greatly agitated on finding herself in the arms of a person unknown, or rather she did not recover her recollection with her perception; for bending her brows, and gazing earnestly on the youth, who held her on his arm, the first words she uttered were: "Are you an angel? am I to go with you?"—But, gradually regaining her senses, she knew me, and throwing herself into my arms, cried, "Sister, sister! am I alive?"—Although pleased with this signal of the return of her intellect, I dreaded a relapse, for I never shall forget the expression of countenance with which she looked at the young stranger who was now on his feet. I can give you no idea of it by words: it was, if I may so say, a look that belonged to eternity; it conveyed a doubt whether she were on earth, or in heaven; there was in it a mixture of intelligence and wildness, and my absence would have left it completely the latter. This was perceived by our unknown friend, who anxiously asked my permission to go for more assistance. The want of assistance recalled her thoughts, and she said, "No, I shall be better pre-"sently."—He then recollected that he was standing without his coat, and said he should be gone for it but a few minutes. I besought him not to return to the field in which it was. He assured me that he would not run any risk, but that his pockets contained some papers, which he valued; "And besides," added he, "I think my faithful Triton will meet me "with it before I am half through the lane."—He then caressed his dog, taking his glove, and calling him fine fellow, noble Triton. The sagacious creature pricked up its ears, acknowledged its happiness by its gestures, and trotted off before its master.

While he was gone I talked to Caroline, who soon

became fully sensible of her situation, and of the wonderful escape she had had. She returned her thanks to the Almighty with so graceful a fervour, that I could, in my turn, have imagined myself in heaven, in company with a grateful seraph. I adjusted her dress; but she was rendered so feeble by the agitation she had undergone, that it was with difficulty she raised herself upon her feet, which I helped her to do on seeing our guardian-angel return, at the same time venturing to tell her that she owed her life to his bravery. He came up smiling; his coat was on, and the holes made by the creature's horns were visible. He addressed himself to Caroline, and told her that he was happy to see her on her feet. She was too weak and too much affected to answer with words: she trembled, bowed, and would have sunk on the ground had he not assisted me to support her.

Finding the greatest caution necessary to prevent her relapsing, all I said in gratitude to the stranger was, that our sense of the service he had so nobly rendered us was too great to be expressed at present.—"Let us only think," replied he, "of conveying your sister to a house: Mr. Cowper's is "the nearest. I fear the distance; for it is near "half a mile from where we are: if I dared, I would "offer to bear her thither in my arms."—"I will "lean upon one of them," said Caroline, "and try "to walk." We both supported her, and walking slowly along the margin of the brook, we reached the farmer's house without an accident. The worthy man came out to meet us, and conducted us into his parlour, where I immediately wrote a note to Dr. Mead, requesting him to lose no time in coming to the Elms, for I was still apprehensive of the consequences that might attend so dreadful a shock; and Mr. Cowper dispatched a boy on horseback

with the note, ordering him to call, as he passed the stables, and send the postchaise for us. Mrs. Cowper urged Caroline to take a cordial, but she took only a glass of wine and water, which produced a good effect on her trembling nerves: she expressed a wish, however, that we would not talk of the circumstance at present, as she could not help every now and then thinking that she saw the horrid monster. Our new friend turned the conversation to the beauties of nature at this season, and discovered as much sense and taste for our amusement as he had displayed courage for our protection.

The evening was closing in very fast; but Cowper's farm, by the direct road, is only two miles from the Elms, and the chaise drove up before I thought it possible for the boy to have reached the house. Robert's readiness had been wrought into an astonishing expedition by the confused account he had received of Caroline's danger, and never had he put his horses to such speed before. I saw him through the window leap from his saddle, and throw the bridle into the hands of a boy that was standing at the door, and in a moment he was in the parlour, where, seeing Caroline and myself in safety, he made a bow, cried, "Thanks be to God!" and immediately returned to his horses.

I had now had a little time to contemplate our stranger. His dress was extremely plain, but his language and manners were those of a gentleman. It was impossible to part without repeating our gratitude. I told him that he would find a greater number of grateful hearts on this occasion, than the two that now thanked him, and hoped he would gratify Mr. Percival with the acquaintance of a person in whom his family must be for ever interested. I said that he would return to the Elms the day

after to-morrow, and would not lose a moment to make the request himself. "I am but a sojourner," replied he; "the emotion you express does you "great honour, but it cannot surpass the delight I "experience at the event to which I have contri- "buted. I am infinitely overpaid for the risk I ran. "Did you know what little reason I have to value "the life I exposed for one evidently so much more "important, it would perhaps lessen your opinion "of what I did; but believe me, I feel that if it "were as dear to me as it is hateful, I should gladly "endanger it for the very hope of such gratifica- "tion as it has now produced." Caroline's eyes were fixed upon him as he spoke; and when he ended she said to him: "Whoever you are, ac- "cept my thanks and blessings, and be assured the "obligation I owe you can never be effaced from "my mind; but if your unhappiness be of a nature "to be removed by the interference of a generous "spirit, I have a brother who, independently of "what you have done for me, would, on his own "account, feel himself doubly indebted if you "would give him an opportunity of serving you."— "Unless your brother," replied he, "have power "to soften flint, and change the destiny that dis- "natures nature, little would his virtues avail me. "But I entreat your pardon for introducing a "thought to your mind which raises your compas- "sion, while I only intended to make you think "with less sensibility of my conduct. My reward "is complete, or will be so when I hear that you "have perfectly recovered your strength, and for "which repose and precautions may be absolutely "necessary; therefore lose no time in thinking of "me, but allow me to assist you to the carriage." Saying this he offered his arm, which she accepted, and having handed us both in, he begged me not to

suffer my sister to talk much on the way: then turning to Robert, he bade him drive slowly. "God "bless him," said Caroline, as the horses went on. She followed his advice in not being talkative on the road; but she made an observation which had also struck me, that although we had only the postillion with us, he had never offered to accompany us, which, from what had passed, it was not unnatural to expect he would have done. Imagine, my dear Madam, how delighted we were on seeing both him and farmer Cowper run up to the door of the chaise as it stopped at the porch of the Elms. After helping us out; "Mr. Cowper and I," said the young stranger, "agreed to walk after your carriage, lest "any assistance should be requisite."—"The pro-"posal," said the farmer, "was Mr. Stanley's; but "you may be sure, ladies, I was very ready to keep "him company." Having enquired how Caroline had borne the ride, they took their leave, preferring the walk back to going in the chaise, as the evening was remarkably fine.

In the course of an hour after our return, Dr. Mead arrived, and brought with him Mr. Shawe, the surgeon, whose assistance he thought he might want. I had prevailed on Caroline to go to bed, as I found a fever coming on, and it had increased considerably before she was seen by the Doctor, who directed her to be blooded. She passed a restless night, and was at times delirious. Mead said, he expected it, but hoped that towards morning she would fall asleep, and wake without the fever; for which, besides the bleeding, he ordered her some medicine. He did not think it necessary to send a dispatch for Edward, but both he and Mr. Shawe kindly slept at the Elms. I sat up with Caroline, and had the pleasure of seeing the hope the Doctor had raised realized between four and five in the

morning, when she fell into a profound sleep. I then went to rest myself, beginning to apprehend from my sensations, that without care I should also be ill; for although I had, in the dear girl's danger, forgotten my own terrors, and was thoughtless of their effects, my whole frame had suffered agonies. I therefore took some of the medicine ordered for Caroline, and calling up Mrs. Burke* to sit by her, went to bed. It was nine before I woke, but I was refreshed, and no ill consequence has ensued from my fright. Caroline, to my great joy, had continued tranquil from the time I quitted her, nor did she wake till the clock had struck ten. She was composed, but the fever had left her in a very languid state. Dr. Mead had risen very soon after I went to my chamber, and on finding his patient in so favourable a train, had returned home in order to pay some early visits, leaving word with Mrs. Burke that he should soon be back; that he was satisfied there was nothing to be alarmed at, and that we had only to continue the medicine, and keep her quiet. Mr. Shawe had accompanied him: their both going away was ample proof to me of her being in no danger, and it set my heart at rest.

While I was sleeping, farmer Cowper had brought his wife in their chaise, to enquire for us, and had left her, on finding we were not up, in order to go on some business, promising to come again for her in the course of an hour or two. She breakfasted with me, and I took the opportunity of mak-

* Much of the obsurity that attends the language of the correspondence of the ancients arises from allusions of a private nature. So here Mrs. Bevil knew very well who Mrs. Burke was, but a general reader may blunder in guessing whether she be her correspondent's maid, or the house-keeper. It is of little importance, however; she is believed to have been the latter.

ing some enquiries respecting our young hero. Were I to give you the account in the good woman's words, with her encomiums and parentheses, this long letter would grow double its length before it would be finished; whereas all I collected from it may be contained in a few lines. His name is George Stanley. The farmer met him accidentally in Worcestershire about six weeks ago, and travelled in company with him and his dog, a whole day; in the course of which Stanley and Triton gained the affection of Cowper, who gave them a hearty invitation to his farm, the situation of which he described to his fellow-traveller, and a visit was promised if ever he were near the spot. About a fortnight ago the farmer received a short letter from Triton's master, which Mrs. Cowper, to gratify the curiosity she supposed had been excited in us by the writer, had brought with her, and which, being short, I think I can remember word for word. It ran thus: "Dear farmer—Your friends, Triton and his master, "will be in your neighbourhood in a few days, and "hoping that you have not forgotten them, they "will come and eat some of your poultry and trout; "but if they like your country as well as they like "you, they would wish to stay longer in it than "they can think of living on you. I want a room, "farmer, where I can put some books, get away "from the world, and read without interruption. "My visit to you shall be three days; after that, if "Triton and I agree about it, you shall place me "in some neat and pleasant cottage, where I may "be accommodated for payment. I am your tra-"velling friend, George Stanley." He came a few days after his letter, and was enchanted with the situation of the farm; and Cowper, rather than lodge him elsewhere, consented, after the first week, to receive a compensation for his board and lodging.

This is the short history of our protector, which I gathered from Mrs. Cowper's conversation; but neither she nor her husband know any thing farther of him, and he is from this hardly less a stranger than before. Whoever he be, my dear Madam, one thing is certain, that he is a noble fellow, and if ever I could defend love at first sight, it would be on such an occasion as this. My remark is suggested from observing, that he has left a strong impression on Caroline's mind. I wrote a great part of the day in her chamber, and heard her repeat to herself many broken sentences, which showed me that he was the subject of her thoughts: "he is un-" "fortunate"—"he is good, he is brave, yet unfor-" "tunate:"—"Oh, God! why should the worthy be" "unhappy?"—"At such an age to spurn at life!"—" "With such a form! such a spirit!" These expressions escaped her at different times. I feel inclined to wish what I suspect, and also, that the impression may be mutual. But the case with him is different; he has not seen her in a blaze of noble spirit as she has beheld him; he has seen nothing of her, but her face and form; and, attractive as they are, I am confident that Stanley is not the man to devote his heart to externals alone. His love, therefore, must have its natural growth. Edward shall form a friendship with him, shall allure him to the Elms, and he cannot be long insensible of the united merit and beauty of Caroline. But what do I say? Perhaps the wretchedness he alluded to springs from a pre-engagement of his love. I must guard her: I must be careful of my Edward's sister. He is a stranger: his mystery may conceal some horrid crime. No, that cannot be; I abhor myself for the thought. Can he who exposed his life to save a fellow-creature be a villain? Then his countenance, his sentiments! I allow that smiles may

cover baseness; that sentiments may be the vehicle of delusion; but when beautiful emanations and elevated thoughts are the concomitants of unequivocal actions, it requires the spirit of a demon to suspect hypocrisy. But I will watch over our Caroline; and you, my dear mother, shall assist me. Whatever passes in my mind is ever open to you, and I still depend upon you to help me through the errors of my judgment.

I have been writing a great part of the day at different times, and it will now be soon a new day; but before I lay down my pen and go to bed, let me add, that Caroline is much better, and entirely out of danger. Soon after Mrs. Cowper left me, Dr. Mead and Mr. Shawe returned; but finding their patient cool and composed, they staid only a short time, having directed the medicine to be continued, and allowed her to sit up, on condition that she did not exert herself much. Good night, my dear and honoured mother! Before I sleep my prayers for you shall be addressed to the Father of Good! to HIM who has heard your prayers of happiness for your

JULIA.

LETTER XLVII.

MRS. BEVIL TO JULIA.

The foundation of real happiness—Courage not a virtue of the soul—It may be odious or amiable—Friendship not a necessary attendant on gratitude—An example for kings.

I FEAR for you, Julia, when I think of your happiness. This earth, my daughter, is not the sphere for bliss unalloyed; but if it be ever pure and unin-

terrupted, it must be the reward of virtue. You and Edward are happy: why are you so? Is it because you are rich? Is it because you are in love with each other? If these were all, feeble would be the basis of your felicity. It is said that the children of adversity are the favoured of heaven: and in truth, it is difficult to preserve virtue in prosperity, which is so pregnant with delusion; which is so rank a soil for the passions, that they shoot forth into hideous and unnatural forms. And what is love unsupported by virtue, but the creature of imagination, a transient phantom that deludes awhile, but leaves the heart open to caprice, and error, and crime? No, it is because you know the use of riches, because you know the true nature of the passions, and admit no spurious ones into your bosoms, because you seek the will of God, and do it. These, my love, are the sureties of bliss: they are yours, they are open to others, and therefore happiness on earth is attainable, although, for want of these, hardly ever attained. Men deviate from nature in their opinions, and pursue the direction of fancy: the passions are not understood; and although all wish to be happy, few have any notion of real happiness. Even they who know and tread its paths, depend so much on the conduct of others that mistake it, and on events beyond their own powers, that it is hardly to be thought that the life of any mortal can flow unmixed with sorrow. Nay, sickness, pain, and death forbid it. I do not mean when we are called away ourselves; but when those we love are torn from us: in such instances to submit, and to hope, is all that remains to exercise the soul. Oh! how I bless my God for the happiness of my Julia! and, secured as it is, I will hope it lasting. To do your part in making it so, I shall inculcate two principles: take care of health,

and regulate sensibility; the first will secure you against bodily pain, and the second will enable you to endure mental affliction with firmness. Poor Mr. Stormont thought himself happy, but depending on a broken reed, a woman without virtue, what is he now? Miss Coverley too is unacquainted with what forms the essence of happiness, and her rejection of Percival's counsels is a proof that her mind is not the soil in which the genuine seeds of it will grow. The grateful retrospect you take, Julia, of the solicitude with which your father and I watched over your infancy, is the greatest earthly joy my heart can experience, and I have no doubt it will be a celestial one, if in other respects I shall prove worthy of immortal bliss.

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I had proceeded thus far in my reply to your former letter, when I received your account of Miss Percival's escape. It has both agitated and pleased me extremely. How visible is the hand of Providence! Yes, my daughter, you are his care. What misery have you and Edward been saved by his leading the young stranger to the spot, at the very moment when a horrid death seemed inevitably to attend Caroline. I too have thanked him for you, and day and night will I repeat my gratitude, as long as he continues me in life; and so will you, my child; for we are all in his hands, here and every where. "In him is our hope and our strong "hold, in him will we trust, then need we not be "afraid of any terror by night, nor for the arrow "that flieth by day." Your sister's preservation, my dear girl, is little less than a miracle, and without it what a gloom would have been cast over the happiness we have just been contemplating as the

lot of yourself and Percival. Oh! may the same divine hand shield you in every danger, and let no evil happen to you!

Young Stanley's action is brilliant, and the courage he displayed captivating. Courage always charms; for which there are various reasons. He that is void of personal fear is ready to be useful to others; dauntless actions are naturally sublime; we are delighted with characters that prefer others to themselves, in which view courage often appears: but the best grounds for our admiration, I think, are produced by the reflection, that contempt for death should, and often does, bespeak the consciousness of a life not unprepared for the judgment of its giver. Yet how little will any of these reasons stand the test of experience? Remember your youthful investigation. Courage is not a virtue of the soul, but an emotion of the frame, and is, in truth, to be rendered amiable or odious according to the motive that draws it forth. It is a gift of nature to other animals as well as to man. How ferocious and horrid does it appear in the bull! how pleasing in Stanley's dog! how equivocal in Stanley himself! for if, in saving Caroline, he were actuated, as he hinted, to expose his life through some disgust to it, there would be a degree of impiety in it that would make us shudder. I therefore highly approve, my dear girl, the suggestions of your reason on the subsiding of the natural emotion which first induced the tribute of admiration and gratitude to your sister's preserver: watch over her; it is your duty. Her education has been different from yours: the peace of her whole life may be endangered by the apparent heroism that saved it. The youth must of course be courted to your house, and the liveliest gratitude manifested; but admission to friendship requires some more knowledge of him; and if to

friendship surely to love, of which the errors are so much more difficult to be retrieved. I would have you hint to Caroline what has so naturally occurred to yourself, that his allusion to the little value he sets on his life, refers to some disappointment of the heart: the thought will act as a shield to hers, and give you time to explore the history and character of this young man. If he be as good as he is brave, you will have my full approbation in becoming match-maker for them, provided it interferes not with the happiness of others. Give my love to Miss Percival, and tell her that the knowledge of her danger, and of her escape, has affected and interested both your father and me very much.

I am delighted with your account of my grandchildren and Edward, and also with the anecdote of Henry the Fourth, which I recollect. But you need not have gone two centuries back, nor out of this kingdom, to find a Prince uniting the characteristics of a great monarch with the qualities of a fond father; one who, in circumstances more arduous than history ever recorded, has evinced the summit of prudence, magnanimity, and discrimination in public affairs, and in the choice of his servants; while in domestic attachments and endearments no man on earth is more happy or more amiable; displaying to the world at once the three greatest characters to be found in it—a good husband, a good father, a good king! Adieu, my dear Julia! Heaven bless you all!

LETTER XLVIII.

SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS, BART. TO JOHN STANHOPE, ESQ.

A choice spirit, and admirer of fine writing—The use of interlineations or italics, and postscripts.

Dear Stanny,

WHY hast thou *held* thy tongue, or *withheld* thy pen? which I take to be *the same thing*, though I could never well make out these *metaphorical affairs* of literary writing, and yet no man loves *fine writing* better than I. I say why hav'nt you wrote to me since you have been at the Elms? I take it ill of you, dear Stanny, for you know how bluddy impatient I told you I should be when you was got there, to know what you thought of those two wimmen they say are *so handsome*, and who, though there's *a mass of money* in the family, are seldom seen *showing themselves*. Tell me all how and about 'um. Charley Percival, as a brother, may be *partial* to 'um, and *rumours are lies*.

As for *your host*, I know him a little; I have fallen in with him sometimes at Freddy Stormont's. A queer fellow! a *moral*, *sentimental*, preaching hound; a NEW JOSEPH! Damn it, Stanny, I thought these MORAL FELLOWS, these pests of jollity and life, had all been hunted out of the country, all anilehated by *the poetical justice* that was set upon 'um, some three or four and twenty years ago, just about the time that you and me was *opening our peepers* on the day-light of the sun. Plenty of PRAYING at the Elms *no doubt*, and I suppose you have *a parson*, though that may not be needful, as the squire himself may like to officiate. I swear, Stanny, I think

his wife and *sister* must have very *relishing charms* to make *him* go down. Mind you write to me all how and about 'um. I am bluddy impatient.

I was going to conclude, till *I remembered* that I forgot what I sat down to write you about. I can't sell *my gig:* once I thought I *had* sold it; for you must know I was dining at an hotel where I met *Colnel Sod*, a gay, airy, rantipole chap, who, *notwithstanding his name*, I never saw on the *turf*, nor ever before *to my knowledge*. I made a bargain with him for ten pounds. I breakfasted in company with him *next day*, when he seemed *to draw off*, but not out and out. As he wasin't at the hotel *all that day*, nor next, I wrote to him, "Sir Richard Brain-"less's compts to *Colnel Sod*, beg to leave the gig "and harness biznis entirely to his choice, viz. *the* "*gig* ten pounds, with springs, *served*, bridle, saddle, "and tugs for tandum two pounds two shillings, or "two pounds two shillings *to be off*. Gig, bargain, "bridle, is unconnected." The devil a bit did I hear or see of him more, and no one knows who he is that I know of; but *off he is*, and I shall leave the gig with Tattersal to get the most he can for it; for I have mounted the most *dashing curricle* in style: but I don't think it's *the prudent thing* to let the gig lie on hand and damage. It cost me seventy odd. It is very good for the *bowling roads* in Oxfordshire: if you like you may take *Colnel Sod*'s bargain; send it down to you into the bargain, pay me when you will.

Yours,

RICHARD BRAINLESS.

P. S. I forgot to tell you that we all got drunk at Percival's the day before yesterday. Charley is *a noble fellow:* his *Burgundy* was of the finest flavor. He kept us all in a roar of laughter. Such a man

should be able to last *for ever;* but Charley is on *a full gallop*, a full gallop, Stanny; he can't hold it long; and it's my belief he is *completely done up* already. Not a word of this *at the Methodist's.*

LETTER XLIX.

JOHN STANHOPE, ESQ. TO SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS, BART.

Beauty and virtue described in the style of a libertine—The fearful adventure of the bull versified in the same style—Sentiment superseded by the dashers—A pun in a postscript.

My dear Sir Richard,

I PLEAD guilty to your arraignment. I promised to write on the third day after my arrival at the Elms, and I entirely forgot you were in the world, till, on the sixth, your letter awoke me from my trance of admiration. The women, Sir Dick, are angels both; but to my taste the married one ranks infinitely above the maid in *terrestrial* divinity; which, to earthly beings, to poor flesh and blood, must carry a charm that your high celestials are too pure to inspire. The sister is certainly a very fine girl, such a one as I should suppose would have animated knights, in the times of chivalry, to heroic deeds, long vigils, and rigorous abstinence. She is remarkably fair, well proportioned, and graceful; but her beauty altogether is of that kind that seems to demand admiration, rather than to promise love. The dame, on the other hand, I pronounce to be a dame of these days, without a spark of Platonism in her composition. She is of a different complexion from her sister, being a brunette, equally well propor-

tioned and graceful; but her eyes—I will not talk to you of their colour or shape—they speak love, create it, promise it. The misfortune of it is, that, by some odd and unaccountable influence, her heart, I plainly see, is still her husband's. What a disgrace to the annals of beauty! Whole years of honey-moon! Fie, fie, fie! the foolish charm must be broken. The very Spaniards themselves say proverbially, that a wondrous handsome woman is not all her husband's own; and shall a free, liberal, lively English beauty take upon her to act so singular a part, and so much against nature, which teaches the heart to delight in novelty and variety? No, no! The lovely Julia must be taught her powers and her duties: she must spread happiness, and increase her own; and will not he who instructs her deserve to partake the reward? I have begun already, dear Baronet, to insinuate myself into her good graces, but the juncture is not propitious. Towers, the author, is at the Elms, and his attentions are insurmountable obstacles: besides, were he to penetrate my mind, the guard he will put upon hers would frustrate every future assiduity. Like a skilful General, therefore, I retire only to come up with a surer prospect of success. There is a clergyman, whose name is Stockton, living in the house; but he is a studious animal, and about some holy work, that occupies the greatest part of his time. There is not that religious gloom at the Elms that you suspect: a short benediction and thanksgiving, from Stockton, without form, when he comes into the breakfast-room, and the dinner graces, make up all the praying I have heard since I came.

The country, for a considerable distance about the Elms, is a perfect garden, and we have had some very pleasant riding parties, in which the ladies have always joined us, till one on Wednes-

day last, when we rode over without them to Woodville, another estate of Percival's. While we were away, the fair Caroline had in good earnest nearly been sent to her angelic sphere. A poet would sing the event in heroic measure, and I suppose it will engage the pen of Towers; meanwhile take it in a lower strain from me, who aim no higher than the *poesies legeres*.

Bright Sol now sinking in the west,
  Had Thetis just in sight,
When two bright forms retard his wheels;
  Suspend awhile the night.

The dames had issued forth to walk,
  The Sun he sunk but slow:
Yet on he must—for Thetis saw—
  Yet left a wond'rous glow.

More fair, more sweet the evening prov'd,
  The twilight long and clear;
The damsels walk'd in cheerful mood,
  Nor ever thought of fear.

Thro' many a field and meadow green
  They chat the time away;
Of all the damsels in the land,
  None lovelier were than they.

But, oh! what danger waits their steps
  As on they graceful move!
Anon they spy a haughty bull,
  Beguil'd of vaccine love.

He paws, he snorts, he bows his neck,
  And bellows rage around;
Th' affrighted beauties, all aghast,
  Dart o'er the trembling ground.

To diff'rent points each bends her way,
  As urg'd by hood-wink'd fate;

One hugs the fence, the other flies
Across to reach the gate.

The maiden this;—on her the bull
First sets his furious eye;
In quick pursuit the monster comes—
The maid must surely die.

Oh! were she but an Io now!
Fair rival of Jove's wife!
The heifer form, whate'er it lose,
At least might save her life.

But breathless, see, before the gate
The prostrate maiden lies;
The bull bounds on with furious force—
Alas! she dies! she dies!

But, lo! a vent'rous, val'rous knight
Appears upon the gate;
He rush'd upon the furious bull,
And snatch'd the maid from fate.

This knight must be a fine cock, Sir Dick; and a more pathetic story about a cock and a bull never was told. The fact is, Miss Percival was in danger of being gored, had not a young man, who is not known in this part of the world, been passing at the moment, and practised a stratagem, used by the bull-fighters in Spain, which fortunately succeeded. He threw his coat over the horns of the creature, which blinded him, and at the same instant his dog, seizing the bull behind, turned him, and gave his master time to place the swooning beauty in safety. His name is George Stanley. Do you know any thing of him? There is not a George among our Stanleys. I have not seen him; for we are but just returned. Percival and Towers are gone to call upon him; and as Caroline is to be kept quiet, Mrs.

Percival sits with her; so that Stockton and I were left to entertain each other; but we agreed to excuse ceremony, and to betake ourselves to writing: he sermonizing for the good of the faithful, and I epistolizing for the amusement of my friend Sir Dicky.

I am heartily sorry for poor Charles. I shall advise him to play a deep game: he must get into Parliament. Where is Mrs. Stormont? I cannot come to the bottom of the affair; there's no talking of it here, as Charles is supposed to be the man. Yes, Baronet, sentiment, thank heaven! is pretty well banished: for one beauty that fell to hypocrisy, ten reward the dashing fellows that look them full in the face, talk balderdash, and damn morality. Your Charleses are the men for the women now. Would Arabella Stormont, or any other fine creature, have been captivated by a moral fellow? Not so fast, Stanhope—there is a woman, and the loveliest of women, who delights in moral sentiment, and who despises the most brilliant wit and facetious strokes of humour, if they strike, in the slightest degree, at sentiment or morality. The lovely Julia Percival has a sentimental husband, and is in love with him. None but a sentimental lover can supplant him in her heart. Well, all I can say is, she shall have the choice of her weapons. If it must be the *Joseph*, be it so; though nine times in ten 'tis the *Charles* that succeeds.

You may send the gig as soon as you please, but then I shall want *Mouse*, to draw it, as I have only riding-horses here. I'll take good care of her for you all the autumn, and I know you can spare her: if not, my dear Sir Richard, you need not be at the trouble of sending the gig.

Ever yours,

JOHN STANHOPE.

P. S. My regards to Percival. I shall write to him soon, and love him extremely: of course you will see the propriety of not disclosing to him any part of this letter. Colonel *Sod!*—where in the name of all that's namable could any of the generation of Adam have picked up such an appellation? I suppose it is his *cog*-nomen.

LETTER L.

SIR RICHARD BRAINLESS TO J. STANHOPE, ESQ.

Sir Richard is charmed with mythology, and loves wit—Charles Percival—Mrs. Stormont—George Stanley—Postscript upon postscript.

Dear Stanny,

Mouse is yours till Christmas. She brings you the gig and this letter; I'd trust her to *no man on earth* but *yourself;* but I know you will see that she is taken care of. Thank you for your account of *the methodist wimmen* and your verses: they put me into such good humour I could not refuse you *Mouse.* You know I love the bell letters almost as well as *racing,* though I never could master them completely. As for you, Stanny, you sit as easy on Pegasus as I do on Gimcrack; and Gimcrack, let me tell you, if he *has not the wings* of Pegasus, has *a powerful stock of wind.* I don't remember who *Thetis* was; the damn'd heap of names those ancient fellows used to give their *gods* and *goddesses,* always bred a confusion in my brain at school; but I suppose it is another title of *Miss Daphne's. Vaccine love* is very fine. I remember *vacca, vaccæ,* a cow. *Io,* I an't quite up to, but suspect her to be the same as *Europa,* who *ran off* with *a bull,* but whose name was

too long to *run off* in your verses. What, after all, most delights me, is the humour of your calling the valorous knight *a cock*, on purpose to have your wit pat at *the cock and the bull*. I do love wit, it *tickles* me so; but sentiment makes me *sick at the stomach*, for which reason I delight in Charles Percival, and shall never be able to endure his brother.

Poor Charles! damn it you are right—he must get into Parliament. I shall be bloody impatient to have him a protected Senator, though, *poor devil*, I don't believe he has enough left to purchase a borough, or stand an election. The *Barn* is mortgaged for *its full value*, and his play in the course of the last month must have pretty well digested *his consols*. He has been lately borrowing upon every thing.

Mrs. Stormont is off, some say abroad with *a new companion*. Charley denies all knowledge of her, but hangs off the subject. I know no more of *George Stanley* than of *Colnel Sod*, who I'll forgive, if he's the arrantest knave in the world, for the sake of his COG-*nomen*: nomen, nominis, a name; COG-nomen, that is, the name he *cogs* with: admirable, Stanny! I don't think Charley Percival himself ever said a better thing. I have bethought myself about GEORGE STANLEY: why, surely it can't be my man *George* that I discharged in the spring? his name I think was *Stanley*, or *Stannard*. If Charley don't get *a seat* before next sessions, what's to be done for him? I hope his *moralizing brother* will keep him above water at least one season more: he will be a devilish loss to the town. My kind wishes to *the two beauties*, and mind you give me good tidings of *Mrs. Percival* soon. *Adio!* as Lady Laurentina says.

Yours,

RICHARD BRAINLESS.

P. S. I can't help thinking of *cognomen*. My father used to say, a little learning was a dangerous thing; I never could find out what he meant, for a *little learning* is certainly better *than none*. Could I now have been so tickled with *cognomen*, if I had not been among scholars as well as blacklegs, and so mixed *utily* with *dulsy?*

P. S. Since I wrote this I have seen Charley, and after some talk with him upon a party he has *at Cheltenham*, I have resolved to go along with him. We shall beat up *the parson's quarters* in less than *three days:* but—mum—Charley chooses it should be unexpected. Keep my man till I come.

LETTER LI.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

A fashionable young man—Caroline's escape—A disappointment—Percival's acquaintance rejected—A country boy's character of a dog.

My short acknowledgment of the Brighton letters I see has not been considered by your Lordship as of sufficient weight to be *itemed* as a *debet* against you in our correspondence; and yet I did hope it would have brought me the sequel of your mad beauty's conduct, which I am still looking for with the impatience, not only of curiosity but of dread. I think her gone, yet wish her saved.

I should have written more largely had I not been particularly occupied with Percival, and for him. The plan my truly excellent friend has laid down and pursues, affords us new views of society, and brings us acquainted with affecting histories. There

shall not be withheld from you, my dear Lord, for there never was a greater congeniality of spirit than I see in your mind and Edward's, and in fact his plan is a counterpart of your own: but at present I have enough to interest you at the Elms, where, on my return, after a short absence, I found the domestic party I had left, with the addition of Mr. Stanhope, an intimate friend of Charles's, and a fashionable young man whom you have sometimes met in company. He has an engaging countenance, with easy manners, and seems to have paid attention to the improvement of his faculties. He has been paying some visits in this part of the county; and Edward, at his brother's request, gave him a particular invitation to pass a portion of his time at the Elms. Several parties have been made to amuse him; one of these was a ride to Woodville, from which Julia and Caroline excused themselves, and the excuse had nearly proved fatal to the latter; for strolling to an unusual distance, the sisters were not aware of a bull's having been turned into a field adjoining to one through which they were passing, and into which it opened. The creature was ferocious, and pursued Caroline, who ran to an opposite gate, and fell exhausted within a few yards of it. Providence, my dear Lord, interposed to save her: a young man unexpectedly darted over the gate, followed by his dog. The monster was just coming up to the spot where she lay senseless, when he was suddenly blinded by the young fellow's throwing his coat across his horns: the dog attacking him behind at the same time, the conqueror snatched up his prize, and in a moment was on the other side of the gate with her. Julia had found another way out of the field. It was some time before Caroline recovered her senses, and the terror had so affected her system, that medical aid was necessary: how-

ever, after a confinement of two days to her room, she returned to our society perfectly recovered.

I was struck with admiration at the heroism of the youth who saved her: it was worthy of a Roman—but why do I say of a Roman? do not British valour and enterprize rival, nay surpass, all that has appeared on the Roman or the Grecian pages? it was worthy of a Briton. Percival's admiration and gratitude sprang forth together, and at his desire I accompanied him to the farm-house in which his sister's preserver lodges, in order to offer and solicit intercourse and friendship. He was gone out; whither the good folks did not know, nor was his return certain. We loitered all the morning, not unpleasantly, with the farmer and his wife, who talked with warmth in the praises of young Stanley, their friend and lodger. They said they believed he was not rich, for he talked of learning to farm as a business, and had seriously consulted the farmer about it; yet he was a gentleman too, for he behaved like one: he was affable, agreeable, free from pride, and not only talked familiarly, but would read at times to them: in short, he was as mild and condescending as he was brave and active. Such were the lines drawn to us by his hosts, and Edward's ardent heart throbbed to call him friend. At three o'clock, Mrs. Cowper, the hostess, assured us he would not be home till night, for he sometimes walked to a great distance, and dined in some cottage as chance directed; and he had made it a rule with them, never to expect him after three o'clock. We left our names, and returned much disappointed to the Elms, where our disappointment was spread throughout the house; for Stanley, the brave Stanley, was the theme of every tongue, and several of the servants had even gone down to see, admire, and thank the preserver of their young mistress.

But what will you say, my Lord, when I tell you, that this youth rejects our friendship and acquaintance?

In the evening, Edward, whose mind knows no ceremony on such occasions, had just proposed to return to Cowper's farm, when he received a short note from Stanley, which I will transcribe. But it was attended with a scene that affected us very much. The tea things were just removed; Julia was singing to her harp, and Caroline was standing by her. At the close of a cadence, Thomas, Edward's servant, opened the door, and was almost thrown down by a large Newfoundland dog brushing by him. He was a shaggy beautiful animal: he gave a look round, then ran directly to Caroline, and wagging his tail, crouched at her feet. The sisters both sat down on the floor by him, and embraced him. Caroline shed tears, while Julia caressed him, and called him Triton, dear Triton, fine fellow. "Where's your master, Triton?" said Caroline. Triton beat the floor with his tail: she had raised his head on her knee. "Is your master "coming, Triton?" said Julia. Triton returned the same answer.—"No, he is not," cried Edward, who had taken the note brought in by Thomas, "nor does he mean to honour us with his acquaint-"ance."—This excited a general emotion of surprise: in Caroline's countenance it was something more, but the difference was so imperceptible that it was not discerned, except perhaps by Julia, who, I observed, watched the emotion in her sister, as she said to her husband, "Explain, my dear Edward:" to which he replied, "I'll read, and do you ex-"plain." He then read the note, which was verbatim as follows:

"SIR,

"It gives me very great pleasure to hear that "Mrs. and Miss Percival are so well after the dread-"ful scene in which it was my good fortune to take "a part. I know that the goodness of your heart "leads you to attach to me, on the occasion, much "more merit than I deserve, a merit of which my "dog justly claims the greater share; for when, by "a rash impulse of my heart, I had thrown myself "in the way of inevitable destruction, he saved both "your sister and me. Believe me I feel myself al-"ready infinitely overpaid by the thanks of the la-"dies, and by the reflection that will accompany "me through life, of having been instrumental in "the preservation of a fellow-creature; any farther "acknowledgment will be painful to me. From "what I have heard of you, I am satisfied that you "will not impute to disrespect the feelings that im-"pel me to decline the honour you intend me. I "am conscious that I am not prepared for company "any where, and certainly no fit associate for the "happy inhabitants of the Elms. Suffer me there-"fore to pursue the humble projects I have in view, "and be assured of the respect of, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GEO. STANLEY."

Every line of this note, my Lord, was an electric shock to the whole circle; but the variation of countenance it produced in Caroline is indescribable: towards the conclusion she leaned her head on Julia's bosom, and averting it to conceal her emotion from Stanhope, discovered to me the tears that ran down her cheeks. "This must not be," cried Edward, after a short pause. "Stanley! Stanley!" muttered Mr. Stanhope, as if endeavouring to recollect the person. "No fit associate! humble projects!"

—" His style," said Stockton, " is not that of a low-
" bred man."—" And the grace of his person,"
" added Julia, " is equally decisive."—" Ah! Triton!
" Triton!" said Caroline, endeavouring to recover herself, keeping her back to us, and patting the dog, " your master is a proud man, a naughty man, " Triton; but you will not feel pain in our thanks ; " will you, Triton?"—Triton answered as before, that he was the happiest of dogs.

I saw that Percival was puzzled how to act. It was a delicate point. His ardour would have hurried him immediately to the farm, had I not suggested the idea of some management being necessary; and it was agreed to take the evening to consider the subject. He rang the bell, and Thomas re-appearing, for he had left the room on delivering the note, he enquired whether the person who brought it waited for an answer. " It is " farmer Cowper's boy Giles, Sir," replied Thomas, " he says nothing about an answer, but is very " anxious to have the dog."—He was bid to send Giles in. " Giles shall not have you, Triton," said Caroline; " I'll bind you fast:" and she playfully tied a ribbon about his neck, and held him by it. Giles soon made his appearance. He was well known to all the family, and was saluted with a general, " How do you do, Giles?" In return he stroked the silky auburn hair that lay parted down his forehead, smiled his rosy thanks, and scraped his rustic bow. That was not all, for Giles had heard of Caroline's escape, and had not seen her since.—" La! Madam, I'se very happy to see you " again," said he.—" Thank you heartily, Giles," replied Caroline, " but I shan't let you have Tri-
" ton."—" Oh la! Madam, but you wull sure ; for I " coax'd un to come along wi' ma, and I could na go " back without un for my head. Measter Stanley

" loves un like his life—and well he ma, for sich " another dog I never seed in all my born days. " Fetching and carrying be nothing. He do sich " sensible things as would maze you, and make you " wonder."—" Tell us what, Giles," said Edward. —" Gracious!" quoth Giles, " a power of things. " I ha known 'un when Measter Stanley were out " wi' un, come hoam on a message, and carry it " back all the same as a living footman. It was no " longer ago than yesterday, he went to Jahn " Aikin's cottage, and toald his dame that one of " the children had faln into the ditch."—" Ay, " Giles," said Mr. Stanhope, " and how did he ma- " nage to do that?"—" All one," quoth Giles, " as " if he had spoken it in so many christian words: " for he runs up to Dame Aikin, and jumps up and " barks, and away he goes; then he stops and runs " back, and looks at her, and sidles and barks, and " so he did over and over again. ' By my fegs, " Giles,' said Dame Aikin to me, as I was a going " past her door, ' your gentleman's dog seems to " be full of somewhat;' and she up and told me " what I have been telling you, when back trots " Triton, and does it all over again. ' Dame " Aikin,' says I, ' he has somewhat to tell you; " you ha better go along wi' un.' ' So I wull,' " says she, ' if it bees only to see what is in the " dog's head.' So saying the Dame followed Tri- " ton, and I goes along wi' ur: and he goes on and " on, wagging his tail down the green lane, till we " got near the great chesnut, when all of a sudden " he jumps into the ditch, and sure enow, when " we came up, there was Triton and little Jahnny " Aikin, a little thing about two years and a half " old, lying in the ditch: as good luck would have " un, it was a dry ditch; and there the little fel- " low had cried himself to sleep. Dame Aikin was

" so surprised never was any thing like it. Jahnny " had gone along with some other little things, " and they had left it in the lane by itself till " it fell into the ditch. But it was not hurt though, " and so I jumped in and took it up, and gave it to " its mammy; and as we went back to her cottage, " Triton walked by her side, and she told it to every " body she saw. The best on't was, that Dame " Aikin thought she was bound to show some re- " turn; and she searches her cupboard, and pro- " duces a nice piece of cold meat, and as she was " cutting it up, Triton slinks away to the door, " as much as to say, I does'nt want it—and so I " told her—says I, ' Triton bea'nt a hungry; he is " too well fed to be a hungry.' Nevertheless she " put it down before un, and the dog turned a bit " or two down to please her, just as much as to say, " hang it she shan't think Triton won't eat out of " proud-heartedness."—" Amiable!" cried Stock- ton, delighted with the story and the naiveté of Giles; " has Mr. Stanley heard of this?"—Naw," replied Giles, " I donna think he has: he has been " either busy or out ever sin."—" Then be sure you " tell it him when you go home."—" I wull, Mea- " ster, it wull please un mainly; for he loves Tri- " ton, as I toald you, like his life."—" And do not " forget the best of it, as you called it very rightly, " where he was too good to show proud-hearted- " ness."—" But Giles," said Edward, " did Mr. " Stanley tell you to stay for an answer?"—" Naw, " an please ye, he did not say any thing to me " about an answer. All as he said was, ' Giles, " take this note:' he wrote it the first thing he did " after he came hoam, when he heard your honour " had been at the farm all the morning; ' Take it', " says he, ' and carry it to Mr. Percival's, and be " sure you ask the servants if Miss Percival be quite

" well.' I promised un I wou'd, but God be thanked " I can speak from my own eyes."—" Well, my " boy," said Edward, " give all our compliments to " Mr. Stanley, and tell him I will answer his letter " soon."—" I wull, your honour, if Miss pleases to " let Triton go."—" Yes, Giles," replied Caroline, " he shall go with you now, to give his master les- " sons against proud-heartedness."—" Sarvant," said Giles, and opened the door: " come, Triton." Out flew the dog, with the ribbon about his neck, which Caroline endeavouring to untie had drawn into a harder knot. Triton, proud of his ribbon, seemed willing to wear it as the badge of his valour and sagacity, for there was no stopping him. Caroline was half vexed, but made Giles promise to take it off on the way.

My letter grows voluminous, but it is long since I deemed it necessary to apologize for such a crime, having been very careful not to commit it without the certainty of an accomplice in my correspondent; and my knowledge of your Lordship's taste for minutiæ carries me over sheets of paper which would remain *intact*, as the French say, were I not sensible that I soiled them for your pleasure. Giles being gone, our conversation turned upon the extraordinary letter sent by the young stranger; and after a variety of remarks and conjectures arising from his conversation with Julia and Caroline on the evening of their awful meeting, and from his declining any further intercourse with the family, it was decided that I should drop in as if casually at the farmer's next day, and make the best I could of the occasion.

I went in consequence about three o'clock, thinking that the likeliest hour of finding him, but to my dismay I found he had gone out early in the morning, that he had taken a change of linen with

him, and was not expected back for some days. I was vexed, my Lord, at this seemingly irrational conduct of a youth whose bravery had opened my heart to him, and I will own to you, that a suspicion entered my mind that he was literally, as he said, not a fit associate for the family to whom he had rendered so indelible an obligation. But it was impossible I could think so long; the style of his note, the impression he had left both on Julia and Caroline, the account given by the farmer's family, his application to books, were all convincing proofs that he was no mean person; and I am inclined to adopt Julia's opinion, that he is some romantic youth, disappointed or thwarted in love, who is seeking a resource in retirement and study. I am also under the necessity of leaving your Lordship to form an opinion of him for yourself for the present, as I will not wait the information of facts before I dispatch this letter, which I trust you will find sufficiently interesting with what it already contains. Adieu!

LETTER LII.

JULIA TO MRS. BEVIL.

Resignation—Providence—A flying visit—Stanhope in favour with Julia—Lord Powic.

Your kind, your charming letter, my dear mother, was most welcome to your Julia. You shall not fear for your daughter's happiness: have I not rested it where you have taught me to rest it; in the fulfilling my duties, in the regulation of my emotions? I trust, with God's grace, never, my dearest Madam, to forfeit these securities which

you have provided for me; and as to the incidental miseries of mortality, I resign myself into the hands of Providence; his will must be done: he will not afflict but for good purposes; and should he think proper to doom me to trials, I will do my best to support them as becomes a Christian. Caroline's danger is the first event that impressed upon my mind, as to myself, the precarious state in which it has pleased Providence to leave the felicity of mortals. The felicity of virtue alone is secure: all the other enjoyments of the heart are exposed to common risks, and, in many respects, are seemingly the sport of chance—of chance! Oh, no! it cannot be: the subject exceeds my comprehension, but the hand of Providence is so visible, even in many common occurrences, that, however he conceals his immediate interference in general, I have no doubt he has established a law paramount to our natures, by which celestial interposition may insensibly take place. There are few miseries on my list of circumspection. *To feel what others feel* has hitherto presented the only pangs my heart has known, and most of these have been transient, from the power of removing them. What most disturbs both Edward and me, for our sorrows and pleasures are the same, arises from three causes: poor Stormont's hopeless state; the apparently inevitable ruin of Miss Coverley; and, the heaviest on our hearts, the down-hill race both of mind and fortune which Charles is running. Thoughtless, inconsiderate, young man!

He has been here, and I am vexed to say a warm conversation, ending in anger on both sides, took place between the brothers. He unexpectedly dashed in upon us last night, with Sir Richard Brainless, in their way to Cheltenham, where they are gone to join a jovial party, and settle excur-

sions for the remainder of the autumn. We could not prevail upon them to stay longer than one night. Charles had heard that his sister had been in danger, and was exceedingly kind and attentive to her: but he rallied her on the state of her heart in so licentious a manner, first as to the young stranger, and then as to Mr. Stanhope, who was present, that the pleasantry of his conversation was spoiled by the dread of painful or indelicate allusions. His companion, Sir Richard, has a smattering of knowledge, which burst out occasionally in conundrums, and catches upon words.

This merry Baronet has created a doubt respecting Stanley, which, I own to you, my dear mother, would, tracing Caroline's feelings as I have done, grieve me beyond expression, to have solved according to the suggestions that have raised it. But I cannot and will not believe it on such empty, vague grounds. The young man's conduct, however, is sufficiently mysterious. You expressed yourself prophetically when you said he must be *courted* to the house: he does indeed require to be courted; and far from claiming an easy admission to our friendship, he even declines our acquaintance, as you will see by the enclosed note which he has written to Edward. If Sir Richard's suppositions are true, he is no other than a servant of his, who left his service last spring. Mr. Towers and Edward both incline to give credit to it; but as the former is writing to my father, and means to detail all the circumstances, I shall not dwell upon them. Poor Caroline! I see she has been surprised into a tenderness which it will not be easy to subdue, and this paltry doubt carries venom to her heart. Edward and I have conversed upon the subject: he has perceived her emotions as well as myself; so has Towers; and all that their united reason and my as-

siduities can do to effect her recovery will be tried. We shall probably remove to Woodville for the rest of the autumn, though Towers talks of leaving us soon for Bevil-lodge.

Mr. Stanhope has won so much on Edward that he presses him to prolong his visit, and he seems inclined to do it. He is an accomplished and agreeable young man, and does not seem to have the wild propensities one would look for in a companion of the companions of Charles. My time has been very much engaged with the calls that have been made to enquire for Caroline. Among other visitors we have had the old recluse, Lord Powic, who you may remember paid us a wedding visit. Lord Chopstone is his nephew and heir, but they have little or no intercourse. He has not been here since, but the extraordinary manner in which Caroline was rescued warmed the old man's blood, and instead of pacing his old grey hunter over the turf by the road side, to the three mile stone, his usual morning ride, he turned his horse's head towards the Elms, and added two miles to his distance, in order to see her and talk of the daring young dog, as he called Stanley. He was considerably disappointed at not seeing him, and spoke in rapture of his action. We praised him too, but were silent as to the conjectures that had been passing amongst us. Caroline is perfectly recovered from the effects of her fright: I fear she will not so easily recover from the effects of her sensibility. She shed tears when her brother read Stanley's note, and has been thoughtful ever since; nor was her distress diminished by the suggestions of Sir Richard Brainless.—Adieu! may heaven continue to bless my beloved parents, prays their

JULIA.

LETTER LIII.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

Charles and Sir Richard Brainless arrive at the Elms—The doubt increased—A warm dialogue—Benevolence with anger.

You see, my dear Lord, that I am true to our convention, of not waiting for answers when subjects arise worthy of communication. I had scarcely sent away my last letter to the post, when Charles and Sir Richard Brainless drove up to the door of the Elms in a fine, knowing curricle of the Baronet's. They were both full of spirits, and flying down to Cheltenham upon some extravagant plans, the extent and views of which they were not themselves acquainted with. Yes, my Lord, Charles is running headlong to destruction—I think there must soon be an end to your Lordship's hope of his reforming. It is too late to save his fortune, and I fear his mind is equally irretrievable, though there still lurk in his bosom some germs of the Percival race, from which, in spite of the clogs that surround them, amiable deeds spring forth.

I am sorry to tell you that he left the Elms in disgust, and that the parting of the brothers is such as to shake their friendship. I dreaded this from the moment of his arrival; for Edward not only knew that he had ruined himself in fortune, but had had convincing proofs that he had abandoned those principles on which all that is honourable, all that is sacred is founded. He had occasionally expostulated mildly, but had been afraid to trust his temper on the subject, since Mrs. Stormont's elopement. He had been very much wounded on that occasion, and had felt severely for his friend's mis-

fortune. He received his brother, however, with a complacent countenance and warm affection, nor was he deficient in civility to Sir Richard. The first enquiries were of course about Caroline: Charles embraced her with double warmth.—"The "wench is handsomer than ever," said he; "the "bull has not frightened away her beauty, Sir Ri- "chard."—"That," replied the Baronet, "would "have been an Irish bull."—"I told you she was a "Circassian," rejoined Charles. "Then why was "she like me yesterday morning at my banker's?" said Brainless. "Faith! I cannot guess."—"Charley not guess! then it is too bad to be told."—"And is not my sister a perfect Cleopatra?" said Charles. "I hope your compliment," said Edward, "is confined to her beauty."—"Oh, by "the Lord," rejoined Charles, "the Queen of "Egypt had wit as well as beauty; she was not so "domestic indeed as Julia. There you are fortunate, "brother; for, by my soul, I don't think there's "such another wife in England; I speak it from my "heart," added he.—"I can hardly thank you," said Julia, "for a compliment at the expence of "my countrywomen, of whom I hold a very different "opinion."—"Well, Caroline, take example from "my sister, and your husband will, I trust, be as "good as hers: if I could hope to be as happy, I'd "marry too." Charles rattled on, and not unpleasantly, the whole evening; the Baronet made puns and conundrums, in which he was frequently obliged to Mr. Stanhope for explanatory assistance; and we were all in good spirits, Caroline excepted and Edward, who indeed assumed a gaiety that rose not from his heart, for that was possessed by concern, which I caught in his eye as he cast his looks from time to time upon his brother; but he interrupted not his conviviality, and checked alone

those sallies that struck at virtue or bordered upon indecency.

In my last I expressed a suspicion that Stanley really was, as he said himself, no fit companion for my friends. The suspicion had but slightly glanced upon my mind, and was almost instantly driven out by superior testimonies in his favour: it is, however, renewed and partly confirmed. The description of his person and his name correspond with those of a young fellow who lately left the service of Sir Richard Brainless, to whom he shortly after referred General Tankerville for a character: but Sir Richard says, he heard that he did not stay long with the General. Stanley's note was produced: Brainless, however, did not recognize the hand, as he hardly remembered to have seen his writing; but George was called the scholar by the other servants. These circumstances, and his expressions in the note, leave but little doubt of his being the same person. What then, my Lord? is he not a man? Yes, and the same Providence that has placed his *fiat* against equality of conditions, has presented the goal of virtue to all alike. The course is open to the peasant as well as to the prince; and the prizes of admiration, of esteem, and of friendship, are the indisputable rights of the victors. The concern I feel on the occasion, and which my letter manifests, arises from my anxiety for Caroline: I told your Lordship that I perceived her heart had received an impression. To have stamped that impression for life, not to remove it, was the prompt wish of your friend: but now how different and how painful the task! Had Caroline been educated like Julia, it were easy to confine her emotions within the bounds of a noble gratitude: but her mind has been cast in a less regular mould. She was not early taught to consider the nature of

the passions, to reason upon them, to regulate them: consequently she is open to a surprise from them. She possesses an exalted spirit; and I believe her incapable of that weakness, which, being easily captivated by externals alone, leads some foolish girls to the solecism of falling in love at first sight. Her case is very different; for beauty of person, of action, and of sentiment, united to influence at once her senses, her understanding, and her heart: but to adjust that influence will be difficult. Her reason and her pride will direct her conduct; there is no fear of her acting wrong: the apprehension lies in the effect the conflict may produce upon her peace, her health, her life. It is for her, my dear Lord, I say my concern is excited, and that concern induces me not to be satisfied that a Stanley should have worn the livery of a Brainless. I am little acquainted with General Tankerville; a melancholy, unhappy being, who avoids mankind, and who has for many years shut up from society his wife, once a very beautiful woman, whose charms have been sacrificed to the green-eyed monster: yet I know him enough to take the liberty of writing to him, which I have done from a faint hope yet fluttering upon my heart, that Sir Richard's account may be erroneous. As to the young man himself, let him be who he may, I will seek him; and I am equally confident that Edward's gratitude will not sleep.

Edward—my dear Lord, your doubts of him are now at an end—Edward is a heavenly spirit, whose influence seems to extend itself to all who know him. He dispels misery, he reclaims profligacy, he makes cottages abodes of joy, he renders villages nurseries of virtue. But his brother?—alas! he can neither make him happy, nor reclaim him. I must give your Lordship a sketch of the conversa-

tion that passed between the brothers, and terminated in a breach which I attempted in vain to repair before they parted. The evening was spent with that jollity which has hitherto attended the career of Charles, and which, unlike other worldly friends, does not seem inclined to forsake him in misfortune. In the morning I had risen early with the hope of conversing with him myself, before breakfast, and indeed he had promised me to be early also, but he had forgotten it, and we were all at the table before he appeared; he entered, equipped for proceeding on his journey, with his usual gaiety, and the heart of poor Caroline was the object of his sallies. Towards the end of breakfast I whispered him that I was going into the library. I found from what he there said that he had been invited thither also by Edward, who came into the room soon after me, and was almost immediately followed by Charles. I will endeavour to recollect the dialogue that passed, to give it to your Lordship in that form.

Charles. Well, brother! well, Towers! here I am. You have no secrets I know.

Towers. You wish to be alone. What I meant to say will do another time.

Charles. Oh! you shan't go—Ned and you have the same things to say to me I know, and I'll hear all at once.

Edward. That Towers and I should feel similar interests in you, my dear Charles, is not surprising; he was the friend of our father, and he is our friend. You leave us abruptly, brother, considering that you see us so seldom. I have much to say to you. I wish you to know and to share my happiness.

Charles. I know you are as happy as you can be, and by the Lord, Edward, I am rejoiced at it—but

your delights and mine are as dissimilar as a church and a playhouse: what makes you happy, would sink my spirits into my shoes. You enjoy being at the head of a family, reading to your wife and sister, solving points of morality and scripture, talking to cottagers, and marrying off their daughters. The last perhaps not amiss, though you are so sly, Edward.

Edward. And pray, brother, what are your delights?

Charles. To feel my blood move quickly through my veins, to have my imagination and my senses continually excited by vivid objects, humour, wit, novelty, laughing nymphs, and sparkling glasses. Count life by the intenseness of pleasure, and one day of my existence will expand to a month of yours.

Edward. That I deny. My pleasures are as lively as yours: but, without taking upon me to compare them, let me observe to you, that you do not seem to set a full value on those that you say form your happiness. Is it not a great inconsistency, brother, to delight in any thing, and yet be indifferent as to the duration of it?

Charles. Ay, brother, now you are coming to the point—now, Mr. Towers, your remarks are going to be anticipated. Edward deserves to have his scope this morning, for he was very good last night; not one long speech, and not above half a dozen moral aphorisms. Well, brother, my extravagance as you were saying—

Edward. Will soon put your own modes of happiness beyond your reach.

Charles. And reduce me to matrimony, and yours—

Edward. Brother, I am serious.

Charles. Too serious by half, brother.

Edward. Is it not time? have I not reason?

Charles. But have I not most reason? and yet you see I am not serious.

Edward. Is not the estate my father left you slipping out of your hands? Is not the Barn mortgaged to its full value? Is not your personal property nearly gone? Have you not debts in every quarter of the town, the extent of which you do not even think of? Oh, Charles! Charles! Can I hear these things and not be serious?

Charles. Psha! to think thus were real madness; and I am as yet, according to your own opinion, but hair-brained. Trust to my fortune, man! I shall recover all yet.

Edward. Infatuated hope! bigger even than despair, with ruin! But that's not the worst of the wild intoxicated career into which you have entered: the evils of poverty you never can endure while your brother has a house or rents to share with you; but where can the loss of honour——

Charles (*with a countenance of displeasure*). Honour! you surprise me.

Edward. I deem it dishonourable to practise upon the hearts of women, to invade the peace of families, to contaminate the sources of society.

Charles. Why, look'ee, brother; if that's what you'd be at—don't, I beseech you, score up against me more sins than I have in common with my neighbours. I honestly agree with you that chastity is a sober, domestic, and very proper kind of virtue for family use; and be assur'd, if I'm no Joseph, I'm no Lovelace; and I think that a very good composition as to this particular species of honour.

Edward. I blush, to think that, bad as the composition would be, it is not founded in truth.

Charles. The lie!—Mr. Towers!

Towers. Not so—you mistake; it is your brother's

eagerness and anxiety for you, and no intentional grossness.

Edward. I would not be gross even where it is deserved; my eyes are the witnesses that support my assertion.

Charles. This is incomprehensible to me: but, if your eyes have turned dirty informers, I think the disgraceful office they have undertaken is some reason for doubting them.

Edward. You have given a mortal stab to the peace of my friend. Regardless of the ties of hospitality; regardless of the dictates of morality and religion; regardless of the friendship shown you by Stormont on my account, you have stolen from him the only jewel on which he had set his heart.

Charles. I!

Edward. Nay, see how your character descends; you would deny it, but it is impossible: and before you degrade yourself farther in the presence of Mr. Towers, let me convince you that I know it by ocular demonstration. "It is a villanous world we live in, "Sir."—These words came from my lips to yourself at Ranelagh.

Charles. More shame for you; and may I meet the same treatment if I have any farther communication with a fellow that could mask himself to turn spy upon his brother. *(He here rang the bell with violence.)*

Edward. A brother that had put on a mask to dishonour himself and injure his brother's friend. But passion will avail neither of us. Where is Mrs. Stormont? *(Thomas opened the door.)*

Charles. Bid my servant bring my horse to the door immediately, without waiting till the curricle is ready. *(Thomas said that Sir Richard had ordered the curricle and horses round, and that they were all at the door.)* Mr. Towers, I address myself to you:

I know not where Mrs. Stormont is, nor am I possessed of virtue enough to criminate her, or any other woman. I think the person who helped her off should know most of her, but it is clear that *the creature* with whom she did go——

Edward. Creature!

Charles. Had no power either moral or physical to attach her. I feel no concern upon that subject: but, Sir, I am concerned that a man you call your friend, and one who deals largely in sentiment, should have made such an extraordinary confession, and used such language before you, while he stands protected by the ties of blood, and the consciousness of having lent considerable sums to the person whom he insults.

Edward. Those suggestions keep pace with the descent of your mind. Far from insulting—but it is too late—He——

Charles. Mr. Towers! I leave you to reap the fruit of the coming sentiment.

Charles was now going, but I held him by the arm, and besought them both not to part in this manner, using the warmest arguments of friendship and reason to reconcile them. Edward was extremely moved. Charles too was agitated; but nothing could overcome the reflection of his having been followed and detected by his brother, although I did not fail to represent to him that Edward had no idea of his being the person. My interference, however, produced one good effect, in preventing them from exposing themselves to the whole family, which must have been the case, had I suffered Charles to rush away with the vehemence of passion that transported him. But all I could do was to prevail upon them to part with the ceremonies of good-breeding. We went out together, and Edward coldly wished the travellers a pleasant journey. Charles had

smoothed his countenance on leaving the library, and gaily bidding us adieu, took the whip-hand of the baronet, who, as the curricle proceeded, went off in a conundrum, which was lost in the noise of his own laugh and the rattling of the wheels.

Such, my Lord, was the parting of the Percivals, of the sons of my old friend, the brothers on whom you and I agreed not in our opinions. It is a pang to my heart. Edward passed the day heavily, having lost his hope of stimulating Charles to a change of pursuits. His anger soon subsided, and gave place to grief. He conversed with me about him. He said he saw the impossibility of supporting their friendship, but it was also impossible to banish from his mind the reflection of the tie that bound them as brothers, or from his heart the desire of serving him. He then proposed several projects respecting him; projects, my Lord, that I can consider only as the inspirations of a divine spirit, and which I trust will in the end succeed, as a recompence to the projector. I will not keep them from you, my dear Lord, but let them take their course at present; they will come better when attended with the result. I am not inclined to conclude my letter with any extraneous topics, or I would endeavour to entertain you with a visit of the third character that attracted our notice, Lord Powic's nephew; the dogmatic Lord Chopstone, who is returned from his Brighton excursion, and seems to be daily losing the sense both of religion and of the nature of government. An English nobleman a democrat! Where shall we look for consistency?

LETTER LIV.

PHILIP TOWERS TO LORD DIGBY.

The doubt resolved—A beautiful youth—A mind thirsting for knowledge—Precautions against love—Association of ideas—Equality.

WELL, my dear Lord, I have received General Tankerville's answer, and we must make the most we can of Stanley's condition. I will give you the General's letter in his own words:—"Sir, The "young man you enquire about lived but a very "short time with me. The name and description "of the person in your letter correspond with those "of the servant who came to me from Sir Richard "Brainless. He no otherwise seemed to me to be "superior to his situation in life, than from a smatter-"ing of school-knowledge, which he had acquired "through the indulgence of his mother's brother, "who was an exciseman in Chester. This I learned "on the occasion of his leaving me. Being a hand-"some, well-behaved, shrewd lad, I did not wish to "part with him; but I was very well pleased to find "that his relation the exciseman had died worth "fifteen hundred pounds; the whole of which he "left to George, who thereupon felt an ambition to "step out of his livery. We parted very good "friends, and I wish with all my heart the youth "may make a proper use of his fortune."

And so he will, my Lord, and so he shall: and he shall have all the assistance that I can give him, and all the assistance that Edward can give him; for Providence who thought fit to place him low in the social system, has ranked him high upon the scale of spirit. By this you will perceive that I have seen and conversed with Stanley. General Tanker-

ville's letter removing the doubt as to his condition, it was agreed, in a conference with Edward and Julia, that the family should spend some time at Woodville, to enlarge the distance between Caroline and her deliverer, and to give her time to make use of her reason in regulating the emotions of her mind. The removal, however, is not to be so abrupt as to raise any suspicion of the motive of it, and it has been talked of for some days.

Having managed, through farmer Cowper, to gain immediate information of Stanley's return, I walked over the next morning early enough I thought to catch him at home, but I was mistaken. The fineness of the morning, and the hope that fortune might bring us accidentally together, tempted me to pass some hours in a kind of hunting ramble. I roamed along the river, and through the most inviting walks of the neighbourhood. At length, towards noon, returning homeward through a green lane, I saw a youth reclining in the shade of a spreading beech, on the margin of a clear rivulet that ran babbling over pebbles. I approached him: his forehead lay upon his arm as if he slumbered: he heard me not. I stood some minutes contemplating his person, and one more elegant I never saw, not even Edward Percival's excepted. My worldliness getting the better of my philosophy, I sighed a secret murmur on thinking that the elegant limb which lay in a most graceful curve before me had borne a shoulder-knot. "Do you sleep, Sir?" said I. My Lord, I speak literally when I tell you, that on hearing my question he raised his head and turned to me the living image of the Belvidere Apollo*. The figure and the countenance together possessed *Il sovra umano: Humanam supra formam.* As for his complexion take it from Tibullus:

* See Sir Harry Beaumont's Dialogue on Beauty.

Candor erat, qualem præfert Latonia luna;
Et color in niveo corpore purpureus;
Ut juveni primum virgo deducta marito
Inficitur teneras ore rubente genas;
Ut quum contexunt amaranthis alba puellæ
Lilia; et autumno candida mala rubent.

A ruddy hue the snowy form pervades,
Such as Latona's in the Delian shades;
Such as appears the blushing maiden's face,
When to the bridegroom led with bashful grace;
Or beds where amarynths and lilies grow;
Or when clear apples take the autumn glow.

Then with what expression in his eye, with what grace upon his lips, did he deliver his words! "No, "Sir," replied he, "I must be lethargic indeed to "sleep in such company." I now perceived a thin book lying on the grass. "I was but making the "last sentence my own," continued he; "it is now, "I believe, indelibly impressed upon my memory. "I will introduce him to you, Sir, if you are not "too proud to know a butcher's son: but hear, and "judge if birth be necessary to friendship and de-"light:

—— Ask the fond youth,
Why the cold urn of her whom long he lov'd
So often fills his arms, so often draws
His lonely footsteps, silent and unseen,
To pay the mournful tribute of his tears?
Oh! he will tell thee that the wealth of worlds
Should ne'er seduce his bosom to forego
Those sacred hours, when, stealing from the noise
Of care and envy, sweet remembrance soothes
With virtue's kindest looks his aching breast,
And turns his tears to rapture.

"How divinely, Sir, does this man give a tuneful "tongue to nature! so true! so congenial!—This "tree, this turf, this rill, how far do they exceed in

" delight all the wealth and honour that await the " name of Tankerville !" This romantic burst, my Lord, astonished and delighted me, and I should again have inclined to doubt its proceeding from the lips of a low-born person, had not those very lips confirmed the tale by the mention of the name of Tankerville, by which all the remainder of uncertainty that hung, in spite of proof, upon my heart, was swept away. That the bestower of genius has no respect of persons was evinced on the spot by his friend the butcher's son, and genius distils the essence of opportunity. I must confess, however, I differ from the General as to the superiority of this youth; for, to say nothing of his person, his taste is far beyond a smattering of school-knowledge; and taste, the friend whom he was conversing with tells us,

> —— Nor gems, nor stores of gold,
> Nor purple state, nor culture, can bestow,
> But God alone, when first his active hand
> Imprints the secret bias of the soul.

The seeds indeed so sown by Heaven require the aid of cultivation to yield the promised harvest; and I see that Stanley has made great use of books. Indeed I should not be surprised to hear some day that he had been more in the libraries than in the kitchens of his masters. I answered in his own strain: " If the disciple of old Harmodius be your friend, " Sir, I trust he will make you mine; listen to his " voice I beseech you:"

> —— Is aught so fair
> In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
> In the bright eye of Hesper or the Morn,
> In Nature's fairest forms, is aught so fair
> As virtuous friendship?

He sprang on his legs, and bowing gently, wished in a more prosaic diction, if it were not impertinent in him to be so curious, to know who did him the honour to converse with him. I told him my name, and begged to make a request, in my own plain language, that he would not deny me the enjoyment painted by the poet. He replied, that I did him honour, and that he could not but wish to cultivate a happiness so unexpectedly and so pleasingly urged upon him. "I learned your friendship with Mr. "Percival," continued he, "from the worthy Cow- "pers, and I could not help regretting when I re- "flected that the note I sent to the Elms shut from "me the hope of your acquaintance."—"I am not," replied I, "so easily repulsed; but for Heaven's "sake tell me why you shun the regard of such a "man as Percival?"—"Such a man, indeed!" said he; "I believe he has not his equal on earth, nor "did I think that such a man had ever existed any "where, but in the brain of a Richardson. I hope "my letter neither offended nor hurt him: but the "fact is, much as I admire, I may almost say, adore "his character, I have such reasons for secluding "myself from the society of the affluent and the gay, "that I have resolved for the present to mix with "no company. My chief reason," added he, sighing, "is too painful, and involves reflections of a "nature too degrading to be explained." I felt for him, and said it was by no means my wish to hear a syllable that would give him a moment's pain. "But one reason," said he, "I will honestly con- "fess to you: I feel conscious of a neglected edu- "cation. I was, when young, put under a pedant, "whose least care was the improvement of his scho- "lars. I learned a little Latin from his usher, and "all I have acquired since has been picked up by "chance, till very lately, when Providence thought

" proper to put it in my power to make some amends " to my faculties. I fortunately was eager for im- " provement, and made the best of an opportunity " of which I am now deprived. Add to this, I am " deficient in the knowledge of men and manners." —I said that I could not judge of the reason his feelings withheld, but that those which he stated I thought ill-founded, for his knowledge and manners were certainly, from the short conversation that had passed, such as would do any man honour: besides, his years precluded any reflections. " You are " very good," he replied, " to encourage me. It " was my intention to fix myself at some farm house " still nearer to Oxford, in order to have the advan- " tage of an instructor; but I know not how it is, I " have become so enamoured of these fields, and am " so pleased with the good people who have receiv- " ed me, that I can hardly determine upon an im- " mediate removal. I returned from Oxford last " night, not very well satisfied with the result of my " journey. The formality of the gentleman to whom " I was recommended to apply, created a disgust in " my mind, which I came back to dissipate in the " Pleasures of Imagination."—" You are fond of " poetry," said I. " Enchanted," he replied: " Can there be any thing more pleasing to the " mind?"—" At your age perhaps not, to those who " have taste. But let me observe, that if you un- " derstand the poem in your hand, you will incur " something like the guilt of affectation by talking " of a deficiency of learning. It is replete with " learning."—" I seized upon it," replied he, " part- " ly for that reason, and partly for the sweet flow of " versification on the captivating subjects of nature. " When I took it up, I was unacquainted with most " of the historical and mythological allusions; but I " searched diligently, and overcame my difficulties.

" I have found much advantage in reading several " poems with the same view. I am under still greater " obligations to poetry; it has soothed my mind; " and, by presenting to my imagination pictures of " nature and of divine benevolence, it keeps down, " if it has not altogether destroyed, the germs of " discontent, and turns the bias of a repining spirit " into a placid acquiescence, harmoniously im- " pressed upon the heart."

My dear Lord, I could not hear this young man talk thus, without secretly ejaculating a renovated doubt of his ever having stood behind a Brainless. We prolonged our walk; I was more and more enchanted with him, and I had the satisfaction to find, that he had pleasure in conversing with me. Poetry, and his eagerness to study the sciences, furnished us with conversation: but of himself he talked little. I found, by the arrival of a box of books, and some mathematical instruments, that he had an intention of continuing at Cowper's; indeed, among other things, he expressed a thought of attending to the business of a farm; " for," said he, " though I have " been brought up to no profession, it may yet be " necessary for me to know one."

I was puzzled in my wishes about Stanley's remaining in the neighbourhood: it would delight me on his account; but I could not behold such beauty and elegance, both of mind and person, without trembling for Caroline. This, however, was in my power to arrange afterwards, and for the present the removal of the family would answer just as well. Before we parted I endeavoured to sound the state of his affections, for I could not but suspect that the ardency which attended his attachment to the Muses was symptomatic of a heart prepared to ennoble the passion of love. All I could get from him, however, amounted only to this;—that the unfortunate should

seek friendship, but fly love: nor while I was with him did I discover any ground to imagine that Caroline had gained an ascendancy over his inclinations, which I partly attributed to his prudence and consciousness of his own situation. When, afterwards, I understood that the spot on which I found him reclined was the very place to which he had borne her in his arms, and held her on his bosom till Julia overtook him; and when to this information I added the recollection of his own exclamation, after he had repeated Akenside's lines of the lover stealing to his mistress's urn: *This tree, this turf, this rill, how far do they exceed in delight all the wealth and honour that await the name of Tankerville!* the truth seemed to strike like lightning on me, and became a double proof of the good sense and virtue of this interesting young man. But, not to anticipate, return with me to the conclusion of the interview and walk I have been describing.

As we approached Cowper's farm, I told him that it was impossible I could part with him without mentioning the indelible obligation under which he had laid the Percival family, and how anxious Edward was to express his gratitude. "Nay, you must "see him," said I; "you will, upon reflection, find "it a duty to give him an opportunity to disburden "his mind to you. The family are under the ne- "cessity of going immediately to Woodville, and it "is not likely that they will break in upon your "time or plans, as they have also a visit to pay in "Warwickshire previous to their return."—"Are "they going to leave the Elms? Well, I wish them "happy wherever they go. As for me, Mr. Perci- "val has certainly a right to lay his commands upon "me, and if it is his wish to see me I will pay "my respects to him. I will call at the Elms to- "morrow morning." This being settled, we shook

hands, and took a friendly leave of each other. You will believe I did not forget to make honourable enquiries for Triton, who, by some accident, was not with his master, having been enticed abroad by Giles before Stanley left his room. " He was presented " by a naval officer," said he, " to General Tanker- " ville, who setting no value upon him, Triton and " I have formed a friendship, and have stuck to each " other." He spoke highly and affectionately of the dog. I was greatly surprised to hear him mention the name of General Tankerville, which he had done twice. This did not correspond with the allusions he had dropped as to the pain he felt from his low station, and indeed I am at a loss to account for the weakness of a shame which is beneath the greatness of mind he possesses, especially too as the very first sentence I heard from his lips gave me an idea that birth was not in his opinion a necessary qualification for friendship or happiness.

On my return to the Elms I made a general report of my morning ; but I reserved for Edward and Julia the colouring with which I have faithfully made it to your Lordship. My information created a mixture of delight and regret in their minds, and we arranged together the plan to be pursued. I did not communicate Stanley's intention of visiting the Elms before Caroline, and it was resolved that Julia, attended by Mr. Stanhope, should take her out early next day, and ride over to see the old Lord Powic, to whom they had given a promise of spending a morning, at Powic-castle. Edward, however, was not altogether satisfied with the arrangement. The absence of his sister would be marked, and she particularly ought to be present to thank the man who had saved her. He proposed, therefore, to go over to the farm himself after dinner, and make the visit to Lord Powic the apology for not seeing him the

next day at the Elms. Our opinions of Caroline were the same. We judged that her pride would be a powerful antidote to the influence of her emotions; but we thought it necessary to watch that no fuel should be added, and with this view to put a stop at once to all intercourse, and the more so as from Julia's discovering that his exclamation in the pleasure of his imagination was made on the spot where he had revived her, we had ground to suspect the impression had been mutual. Accordingly Edward and I rode over to Cowper's farm. We found Stanley in the midst of books, which he had been unpacking, and which lay scattered about him. He received us with a grace (how he acquired it, is of no importance, my Lord) that would have become a man of your own rank. The meeting was charming. Edward said he was too impatient to postpone his pleasure a day, and he expressed his thanks on his sister's obligation very warmly. On the other hand, Stanley made light of it. "It was, indeed," said he, "more good fortune than merit, more a "matter of the nerves than a virtue; the impulse I "felt to attempt the stratagem I practised was irre-"sistible from the instant I saw the situation of Miss "Percival; and I saw her before she fell, for I was "opposite to the gate, to which I ran with my ut-"most speed, and I thank God, in time to do what "has so delighted you, and will be an everlasting "pleasure to myself." I will not, my Lord, at the conclusion of a long letter, dwell minutely on the conversation that passed: it was such as could not fail to leave impressions of regard and esteem on both sides; although on ours perhaps a little shaded with regret, that the peace of a beloved sister forbade the immediate extinction of that inequality which the nature of society had raised, but which virtue and gratitude would have thrown into oblivion.

Not a word, however, passed that could raise the thought in Stanley. He repeated his wish and intention of secluding himself for the purpose of study, accepted our apology for not receiving him the next day, and said, that if he were still at Cowper's farm when Edward returned, he should feel himself honoured and be happy in being noticed by him.

On our way home, Percival spoke in glowing terms of our new friend. After a few minutes' silence—"I am almost ashamed of myself," said he, "to suffer the thought of his former condition to "have any weight upon my mind."—"It would "have had none," replied I, but on Caroline's ac- "count."—"I think, Towers," said he, "that you "have taken as much pains, and with as much suc- "cess as any man, to clear your mind of prejudices; "I have, I hope, made some successful efforts too; "yet, here is a young man, amiable, brave, virtuous, "with noble faculties, panting for knowledge, gain- "ing all hearts, and possessing a person that "heightens the charms of such a mind, but having "worn a livery, our hearts are beset with repugnance, "and we are taking pains to shut him out, without "dishonouring our sense of an obligation which can "never be repaid. Is this a lurking prejudice, or "can its origin be reasonably accounted for?"— "You remember," replied I, "that we are not to "expect perfection in sublunary systems. Nature "itself, the work of an all-wise, all-powerful Being, "presents us with inexplicable appearances: no "wonder, then, if the social order, which, though "the dictate of nature, is the fabrication of man, "should be attended with circumstances that seem "and are defective. Should virtue only give esteem "and rank? No; talents, and wealth, and with "them birth, must be the usual paths, for they be- "stow power. It is the will of Providence, that the

" reward of virtue should be placed higher; and " here it seems in general left indifferently to con- " science and the course of things. With talents, " wealth, and birth, the mind connects liberal en- " dowments, because they can, and do, generally " procure them; with certain conditions it connects " a want of liberality, and a deficiency of gentle " manners, because they are the consequences of " them:

> " Tom struts a soldier, open, bold, and brave;
> " Will sneaks a scriv'ner, an exceeding knave."

" True," observed Edward, " but when we have " conviction that a servile state has not been able to " stamp servility on the mind; when, on the contra- " ry, we find a very superior spirit animating even " the wearer of a livery, what spell is there to keep " him out of the circle?"—" The incantation is that " of nature," said I, " by which our happiness is " made, in a great degree, to depend upon the as- " sociation of our ideas. A livery, and its attend- " ant train of thought, will ever accompany the man " who has worn one, be the esteem he merits and " receives what it may."—" I think," replied Ed- ward, " that time and repeated noble actions may " form such new associations as to obliterate the " former." I said, " if so, it must be allowed to be " very rare."—" And is not that the reason, then," said he, " in the opinion of many for justifying the " lower classes of society in attempting to beat down " the dividing barrier, and to supplant the other " classes?"—" The answer is, that such attempts, " when successful, make no alteration in the nature " of things, nor improve the social order, but lead " to a perpetual revolution of robbery and murder. " Different men may succeed to wealth and power,

"but wealth and power will retain their own pro-
"perties, want and ignorance their associated ideas;
"so that civil war would be the standing order of
"nations, till the countries they inhabit were ren-
"dered deserts, and the globe itself dispeopled."—
"It is so," said Edward; "the happiness, nay the
"very existence of society, depends upon the due
"subordination of its members, and the content-
"ment with that station assigned us by Providence.
"But virtue, Towers, virtue is a being that soars
"above forms: her feet are on the earth, her head
"is in heaven. We must love and reverence her,
"while we sacrifice to forms, and yield to the asso-
"ciations of the mind."

Adieu, my dear Lord; I could not help lengthening my letter with this conversation, which I know will not displease you, nor will you from it suspect your friend of flattery to the rank you adorn; you know, on the contrary, that I respect it only as it is an illustrious field of virtue, and that I think vice doubly hideous under robes.

LETTER LV.

JULIA TO MRS. BEVIL.

Corroboration—Lord Powic—An unexpected meeting—A powerful effect of imagination—An electric question—Powic-castle—A black chamber, and gloomy apparatus—A repentant father—Ghost or not?—Lord Chopstone—Charity syllogized into a vice, and restored to its place among the virtues by the eloquence of common sense—A trifling incident, but which, perhaps, the reader may think important—Mr. Stanhope—A noble resolution.

I WRITE to you from Woodville, my dear Madam. Mr. Towers's letter to my father renders it unne-

cessary for me to be particular in the circumstances that have led to the confirmation of Stanley's real situation in life. Sir Richard Brainless's account has not only been established by General Tankerville, but by the words of the young man himself, who, though he has not absolutely said that he was in the General's service, has dropped such expressions as sufficiently intimate it. He told Mr. Towers that he had got his dog Triton at the General's; and in the same conversation he made some observations respecting birth, hinting that his secret feelings were of a degrading nature; so that we have no doubt remaining on this head. The answer he made to Caroline, when she offered him her brother's assistance, is now explained. You may remember it was, "unless your brother have power "to soften flint, and change the destiny that dis-"natures nature, little would his virtues avail me." The allusion of this sentence is evidently to the obduracy of opinion, and the rights of the mind to surmount the distinctions prescribed by the forms of society. What a pity, my dear Madam, that he should possess a sensibility which turns his prosperity in some degree into a misfortune. I cannot help confessing to you that I am grieved at the result of our enquiries respecting this youth, whose appearance is so noble, whose actions are so amiable, whose sentiments are so elevated. I am doubly grieved from finding that our dear Caroline has awakened in him emotions similar to her own, and which, if not immediately extinguished on both sides, can only lead to distress. How different, my dear mother, is the part I have to act, from that which a precipitate imagination painted to my hope, while my heart glowed only with the remembrance of his bravery, of his modest manners, and interesting countenance! What a scene of happiness for a

moment played upon my fancy! Now is it my lot to oppose the progress of affection, and to exert all my power, not to promote felicity, but to obstruct the approaches of misery.

The information I have to communicate to you is extremely affecting, and your heart will sympathize in our feelings: but I must give you my narrative with order. The result of a conference with Edward and Mr. Towers, after he brought us the intelligence of Stanley's proposed visit, was, that we should prevent his meeting Caroline, by riding over to Powic-castle, and removing the day after to Woodville. The Earl of Powic has for many years past relinquished the enjoyments of social life. He is near seventy. Formerly he had distinguished himself in the gay circles of fashion, and had been spoken of for eloquence in the House of Peers; but on the loss of his only son, Lord Coteridge, whose death he attributed to the rigour with which he had treated him, he retired from the world, and has never been happy since. Within the last two years, however, he has so far remitted his melancholy as to converse with some of his old friends, and occasionally to receive a few favoured visitors. We have not been among the number, yet we hear that he speaks civilly of us, and when we meet in our rides, he never fails to stop and talk. I told you that Stanley's bravery had procured us a visit from him, and that he was disappointed at not seeing him. While with us he chatted with considerable gaiety, and requested to add the Elms to the number of his friends who visited Powic-castle. The manner of his doing it secured a ready compliance, and made it necessary for us to go over before we removed, and we took this occasion to do it.

My Lord received us with a kindness superior to the common attentions of urbanity. "Mr. Percival,"

said he, "I have always had it in view to cultivate "your friendship, but I am old, and solitary, and "serious. What has such a man to return to the "young, the social, and the gay?" Edward was warm in his replies to the old Lord, and we were all mutually pleased. Mr. Towers he knew well by reputation, and had seen him before. Mr. Stanhope he received as Edward's friend. "But where," cried he, "where is your hero, Miss Percival? I "long to see the daring dog." Caroline endeavoured to rally her spirits, which have been very low. "Our hero, my Lord," said she, "keeps "aloof; he has not honoured us with a visit."—"Not been to the Elms!" exclaimed he, "does he "dread beauty more than a wild beast?"—"He is "a very singular young man," said Towers, supporting Caroline's courage; "he has formed a de-"sign of secluding himself, in order to devote his "time to study."—"Seclude himself!" cried Lord Powic, "a pretty age, nineteen, for seclusion! Oh! "we'll seclude him, we'll seclude him by and by." —"His reasons for it are very amiable, my Lord," said Mr. Stanhope: "he has an infinite thirst for "knowledge." Stanhope said this with great good nature; for though he has no suspicion of the bias of Caroline's or Stanley's mind, he knows the situation of the latter. I must make you acquainted with Mr. Stanhope, my dear Madam; he has with talents a delicacy of thought and conduct that will gain your regard. I think of asking him to accompany us to Bevil-lodge, or to meet us there. "Thirst of knowledge!" replied Lord Powic, "we "must find an instructor for him." As he said this, he looked archly at Caroline: she was not confused, and I began to think that she had summoned her pride as an auxiliary.

We went early to Powic-castle, with the in-

tention of returning after a little chat with his Lordship; but when we had been with him about an hour, he got from his chair, and going up to Edward said, " Mr. Percival, I cannot part with you: " make me happy by consenting to pass the day here." Then looking round, " I see there is no " voice against it, so excuse me a moment till I " speak to my butler." His Lordship was out of the room in a moment, and we were none of us inclined to reject his hospitality. He was absent about a quarter of an hour. The rest of the morning passed very agreeably; but I wish we had been spared the sequel of Lord Powic's kindness.

After seeing the house and gardens, we returned to the parlour in which he had received us, to wait the serving of the dinner. In a few minutes a carriage rattling up to the vestibule, my Lord walked eagerly into the hall, leaving the door open. We heard the steps of the carriage let down, and immediately afterwards the cry of Help! help! We all rushed into the hall: judge, Madam, what we felt on seeing Lord Powic apparently lifeless in the arms of Stanley. The confusion created by his Lordship's situation was fortunate for Caroline; I observed her change colour; but before Lord Powic revived she recovered herself, and with additional firmness, without being remarked by any one else. Stanley had placed his Lordship on a rustic bench that stood in the hall, and was sitting on it, supporting him. " What's the matter, my young " friend?" said Towers? " what cause?"—" I know " not," replied Stanley; " pray is this Lord Powic?" —" It is."—" I no sooner stepped out of the car- " riage which he sent for me, with this note, than " he would have fallen on the pavement, had I not " caught him in my arms, and placed him on this " bench." Towers took the note, his Lordship's

swoon continuing, and eager to see if it could any way account for the effect that had been produced, he read it, Edward and I looking over. It was a short and strenuous invitation in these words:

"I understand you are an odd fellow, and shun "new acquaintance; I beg leave to inform you that "I am still more odd, shunning not only new but "old acquaintance, therefore let us have an odd "meeting. Your friends dine with me this day, I "insist upon your being of the party; and de- "termined to take no denial, I have sent my car- "riage to bring you. Do not balk me; if it returns "empty, I will get into it, and come for you my- "self.

"POWIC."

There was nothing in this to cause perturbation —we therefore suspected his Lordship's fit was a common occurrence; but on enquiring were informed that it was not. Every means was taken to recover him, and after some minutes he began to come to himself. I cannot describe to you the violent emotion with which the old man's countenance and whole frame were affected as he regained his senses. He trembled all over, every line of his face was marked with agitation, and the discomposure of his white hairs heightened the picture of distress he presented to us. At length he opened his eyes, and fixing them on Stanley, gazed upon him for a full minute, then bursting into a flood of tears, exclaimed: "Oh, my son! my son!"—Every eye, every ear was attention itself. "Wonderful "power of imagination! I think I see my son. "Have I been asleep, and dreamed that twenty "years have passed away? Oh, merciful God! it "is he himself, and I have been no parricide." Here the poor old man swooned again into the arms

of Stanley, whose cheeks were bathed with his own tears. Towers advised him to remove, which he did, and withdrew into the parlour, where the interest excited by the scene kept him at the door. When my Lord revived, he found himself supported by Caroline, to whom Stanley had resigned his seat. After looking fixedly at her for some time, as if making an effort to recover his recollection, he exclaimed: "Good heaven! Miss Percival!" then casting his eyes round, and not finding the object they were in search of: "This," continued he, "was the most powerful illusion of the senses ever "experienced by man." He looked towards the hall door, which was left open to admit air, then raised himself a little, pointed to the vestibule, and addressing Edward, said, "I see you not plainer "than I saw my carriage draw up there, and my "son spring out of it just as he was used to do "twenty years ago. Poor Coteridge!" here the tears again rushed down his cheeks; "with many "other brave fellows he fell climbing the heights of "Charles-Town. Day and night have I thought of "him ever since, and sometimes my imagination "has seemed upon the point of mocking my senses, "yet never before has it effected such a deception: "and I wonder it did now, for I was not thinking "of him. I was, I confess to you, full of a little "plan of producing an unexpected meeting here "with young Stanley, and thought him coming "when I fell into this swoon."

Edward, who saw the danger of Stanley's suddenly re-appearing, went into the parlour to detain him there, while Towers, diverting my Lord's thoughts from the object that had occasioned his distress, proposed that he should lean upon his arm and walk a little way in the air to see if Stanley were coming. Caroline and I attended them. Dear girl! she

whispered to me going out at the door, little thinking how much her observation betrayed her heart: "You know, sister, it is impossible; for Lord Cote-"ridge was a man grown when he was killed, and "that is eighteen or twenty years ago." Mr. Towers prepared Lord Powic's mind by degrees to receive an explanation of the resemblance he had seen in Stanley of his son. He put him in mind how variously people were struck with the likeness of a picture, and that from the diversity of vision, portraits were often thought to resemble different persons. His Lordship being pretty well recovered, when we had nearly reached the door on our return, Towers ventured to hint that there might be a striking resemblance between his son at the age of twenty, and Stanley, who he believed was not now more than nineteen. "You astonish me," cried Lord Powic; "is it possible that Stanley has been "the cause of my delusion and emotion? Do tell "me; I can bear it now. It will even relieve me "to be convinced that my senses have not been "imposed upon by the fearful operation of a dis-"tempered frame."—"If so, my Lord," replied Towers, "be assured that your mistake is not the "effect of distemper, though perhaps the power of "imagination is at the bottom of it. There must "no doubt be a resemblance between the figure of "this youth and that of your son when you last saw "him, and the perceptions of a father heightened "it to the degree you were struck with."—"Then "Stanley is here," said his Lordship, "and it "was he whom I saw? 'tis wonderful!"—"Does "your Lordship think," said Towers, "that you "can support another interview at present?"—"I "would not lose it for the world;" replied the old man.

As we entered the hall, Mr. Stanhope met us,

and told his Lordship that the gentleman whom he had invited was arrived, and now in the parlour. "I thank you, Sir," said Lord Powic, smiling, "I "see the kindness of your intention: I feel strong "enough to see Mr. Stanley again." He then walked without assistance into the parlour, whither we followed him. Stanley was presented by Edward. How shall I give you an idea of the scene that ensued? I wish my pen were in the hand of Towers, but he is not with us. It was a living picture, and worthy the canvass. The beauty and elegance of Stanley's person suffered nothing from the embarrassment he evidently laboured under, for it was the embarrassment of sensibility, not of defective manners. The emotion of the old Lord was by no means subdued: he riveted his eyes on the youth, who, approaching him, uttered; "I am "distressed, my Lord."—"His voice too!" exclaimed the Earl; "you will forgive me, Sir; our "friends will all forgive me for the uneasiness I have "caused them, when I say that I am entirely over-"come by the resemblance you bear to my unfor-"tunate son, who about twenty years ago fell in the "service of his country."—"I am highly honour-"ed, my Lord, by the resemblance, but extremely "distressed by the effects of it," said Stanley. "That your voice too," repeated the Earl, "should "be so alike, increases my wonder; but come, give "me your hand, and with it your friendship, for "the few remaining years of my life." Stanley presented his hand and bowed. "Stanley is an ho-"nourable name," continued his Lordship; "in "what part of England does your family reside?" —You may conceive, my dear mother, the shock produced by this question. Caroline's face became crimson, but she managed I believe to conceal it from all but me, by turning to the window. No one

seemed to have escaped the sensation, except the person to whom the question was addressed. With an amazing self-possession Stanley replied: "When "I tell your Lordship that I feel great pain in talk- "ing of my family, I hope you will excuse my "avoiding the subject: at the same time I think it "incumbent on me to assure you, my Lord, that "I have no relations among the Stanleys you allude "to." How candid was this, my dear Madam! how indicative of a superior spirit, that scorned to be valued for what it had no right to!—"I am sorry "you have any such cause of pain," rejoined Lord Powic, "nor will I be the means of inflicting any "upon you; only let me say, that if you have a cruel "father"—— Here Stanley seemed to be agitated —"inform him that Lord Coteridge also had one, "on whose bosom remorse and anguish have preyed "for twenty years, and to whom repentance brings "relief only as it yearly accompanies the diminu- "tion of sensation, and removes the mists of life "that keep the grave unseen." The old man wiped the tears that now began to fall, and again shook Stanley by the hand.

Dinner, which had been delayed a considerable time by these circumstances, was now announced; and my Lord, taking me by the hand, led to the saloon. Placing himself at the head of the table, he seated Caroline and me on each side of him. Towers having taken the chair next to Caroline, and Mr. Stanhope that next to me, his Lordship, willing to pay a particular attention to Stanley, requested him to act as his aid-de-camp, on which he bowed and took the bottom of the table: but my Lord could not keep his eyes off him; it was with difficulty he helped the soup, and before it had gone round, he begged Towers to change seats with Stanley, for the situation he had given him brought Lord

Coteridge so strongly to his mind, that it distracted his attention. This move made Caroline and her deliverer neighbours. However, she behaved admirably, and through the remainder of the day addressed herself to him, and to the rest of the party, with so much propriety as to cast an impenetrable veil over the real state of her heart; though the old Earl did not fail to take opportunities of rallying her with allusions which more than once brought the blood into the face of her hero. In spite of the awkward recollection that could not but obtrude on the minds of several of us, the time passed very agreeably. My Lord became more and more pleasant as his eyes accustomed themselves to Stanley, and Stanley himself was constantly saying something that excited admiration or affection; nor did he pay any particular attention to Caroline.

When we had taken our coffee, which was served in the French fashion after the wine, and followed by a *chasse-caffée*, Lord Powic told us he would enable us to judge of the resemblance that had had such an effect upon him. "There is one room," said he, "which was not shown to you in your walk over "the house; a penitentiary cabin into which I "admit no one, except the person who sweeps it; "but as you have seen my agitation to-day, and "know the cause of it, I will take you to my cell. "I have two keys to the door of it, one I always "keep myself, the other is left with the person I "mentioned, who is an old huntsman, and the only "man about the house that remembers my son." He rang the bell, and a servant attending, he asked where William was. "The old man has been out "all day, my Lord," said the footman, "and is "but just come into the stable."—"Tell him to "come to me in a few minutes," said his Lordship; "I am going to Lord Coteridge's apartment. I wish

"to see if the old man," said he to us, as the footman left the saloon, "will be struck as much as I "was." My Lord now led the way. Powic-castle is a noble old mansion, and deserves to be described; but my letter being already voluminous, it will be sufficient for me to tell you, that there are two modern wings which run backward, and are much lower than the old building; a long gallery, or rather piazza, preserves the communication under cover between the two wings: through this piazza his Lordship conducted us. Ascending a flight of steps, of mosaic pavement, we entered a stuccoed antichamber, in which there were four niches containing busts of the family: over the door of the apartment into which we were going, there was a fine painting of Busiris about to sacrifice Hercules: "But the hero," said his Lordship, "snapped the "cords that bound his hands and feet, and the tyrant "became the victim: such should ever be the re-"ward of cruelty." Saying this he threw open the door, which, when we were all in, he again shut, putting the key into the lock on the inside. You will conceive, my dear mother, with what awe, not to say horror, we were struck, on entering this apartment, when I tell you that the four walls, which were of equal dimensions, and in which there was no window, were of stucco deeply blackened. The light was admitted through a large dome in the centre of the roof; the floor was every where covered with black cloth. On the side opposite to the door stood a table, over which lay a cloth of the same die; and on one side of the table was a black velvet chair, the only one in the room. In the middle of each of the walls, from the cornice to the ground, hung a curtain of bombazine: that which was over the door was drawn aside when we went in, but was let down by his Lordship, who, observing our sur-

prise, said: "I see you are struck with this dismal "array—I am accustomed to it; it suits the gloomy "habit of my soul; but we will not stay long. "These walls were once gay with the works of "Raphael, Buonarotti, and Titian. Here Coteridge "read, and painted, and played in concert: his bass "still lies beneath that table. Under the curtain "that falls behind it is his portrait at full length: "the curtain on the right covers a painting of a "battle; that to the left the picture of—but you will "see." He then went to the table and drew the line of the curtain which parted in a festoon, and discovered the portrait of his son. We no longer wondered at the effect the appearance of Stanley had produced on Lord Powic, for the picture could hardly have been more like its original. It is a most wonderful coincidence of features, my dear Madam, and also of form. "Observe the smile," said Lord Powic; "what life in the eyes!" While we were contemplating this with astonishment, my Lord, having fixed the line of the curtain, went back and drew up that which hung over the battle. To this he called our attention by saying; "Now come, "and behold him in death." The representation of a battle is always shocking to me, but it was here rendered doubly so by the elegant and beautiful Lord Coteridge in regimentals, lying dead upon the ground, and his blood streaming from his breast, which was bare, as if to shew that he had been shot through the heart: a wounded soldier sat by him, and was in the act of opening the waistcoat and shirt bosom. The frame of this picture was suspended by strong, black cords: below it stood a large magnifying reflector, almost of the same size, which being upon castors, his Lordship easily drew from the wall, and placed in the spot where he knew the focus to be adjusted to give the most natural effect to the

painting, which he then lowered to the floor. If we were affected before by the picture as it hung against the wall, imagine what our sensations were when, by the property of the glass, the objects assumed the appearance of reality. It was too much: I cannot conceive how Lord Powic can endure the repetition of it. One of the gentlemen, at his request, had brought up the chair, on which, having first placed it before the mirror, his Lordship sat down, and gazing at the bleeding body of his son, clasped his hands together, and gave a groan, while tears gushed from his eyes. "My dear Lord "Powic," cried Edward, "forbear to court such "torture: have mercy on yourself."—"One mo-"ment," replied he, "one moment—these pangs "are dearer to me than all the joys of life—my "blood flows from that wound; perhaps you think "my boy died by the ball that stretched him there: "no, the mortal blow was given by a dagger; his "heart was twice pierced, but the friendly ball "only struck out the guilty blade, and sent him to "the regions of bliss. Oh, Coteridge! Coteridge! "my old heart is still too tough to break."—This scene brought tears into the eyes of all present. Caroline wisely averted hers from the mirror, but as she leaned against me, I felt her heart beat violently, on which I whispered to Edward that I feared she could not support herself. My Lord, observing this, wiped away his tears, rose, begged pardon, and said he would distress us no longer. I proposed to Caroline to leave the room, but she chose to remain, saying, that as she had borne what she had already seen, she was sure she was equal to any sight of horror. His Lordship, however, seeing how she had been affected, took Edward aside, and explained to him the nature of the painting that remained to be shown; upon which Edward advised us not to look

at it, but to go to Lord Coteridge's portrait. To this Caroline assented, but I believe less from a dread of a new shock, than from a desire of contemplating features and a form, of which the images haunted her mind. As for me, not having the same motives, and having learned from you a sufficient command of my feelings not to suffer them to be easily appalled, I resolved on seeing the whole mournful contrivance of a tortured imagination. Caroline withdrew to the upper end of the room, and Lord Powic raised the third curtain. Oh! how I shuddered! On a table covered with black, lay a heart transfixed by a dagger. A dark back-ground cast a gloom upon the prominent objects. Before the table stood the figure of a middle-aged man in mourning, with dishevelled hair, clasped hands, and a countenance full of horror and remorse, his brows knit, and his eyes fixed steadily on the heart. From the disorder of the features, difference of age, and total dissimilitude of the hair, I should not have been struck with the resemblance of this portrait, had not my mind been prepared by previous circumstances, to discover in it the father of Lord Coteridge; but so prepared, I soon found it to be the Earl himself, taken at a period shortly after the loss of his son. "Behold," said his Lordship, "the picture of a "father! Oh! Mr. Stanley, would to God yours "could look at it! but I beg your pardon." Stanley shuddered on being thus addressed. "Come, "come," continued his Lordship, "let us now de- "sist from contemplating these sad objects. I have "afflicted you enough: the occurrence of the morn- "ing led to it. When we leave this room you shall "also leave behind all the painful sympathy created "by an old man, who assures you, that he feels his "wounds healing as he approaches that state where "Coteridge has made his father's peace; that father

"who sacrificed him to revenge and pride. The "story is short: Coteridge's mind and accomplish- "ments surpassed even the beauty of his person; "he would have been the pride of the peerage: "unhappily he yielded his heart to the daughter of "a man whom I abhorred; the hatred was re- "ciprocal, and her father would have put her to "death sooner than have seen her the wife of a son "of mine. Coteridge persisted in his attachment; "I swore vengeance—I swore to disinherit, to dis- "own him; I met him with frowns, I parted from "him with curses; I allowed him no income, I "banished him at last from my sight, till he should "renounce his guilty passion, for guilty it appeared "to me in its opposition to mine. At length, un- "able to support my cruelty or relinquish his love, "he suddenly embarked as a volunteer for America. "I need say no more, for you have seen the rest," added he, pointing first to the one picture and then to the other, "his fall and my anguish. Come, let "us now away, and forget it for the present."

As we accompanied him to the door, he recollected, on finding the key on the inside, that he had ordered old William to attend him. "Oh, but the "old huntsman!" said he, "I have an inclination "to see how he will be struck with the resemblance "that brought us here. I hear him in the anti- "chamber: pray, Mr. Stanley, walk to the other "end of the room and meet him as he goes up to "let down the curtain." He then called to William, and asked why he did not come in. "Because your "key is in the door, my Lord," answered the hunts- man. The door was opened, and we all went out but Stanley. "Go in," said his Lordship, "and "let the curtains down." William went in, and we stood behind the door curtain. Going up immedi- ately to one of the sides, he had laid his hand upon

the line before Stanley caught his eye. On perceiving him he started. "I b'ant easily frighted, "my Lord," said he, addressing Stanley, "but I "be free to own you make my hair to stand an end. "My mother once saw a spirit, as she told me, and "she bid me, if ever I should see one, to speak "boldly, and it would do me no harm."—"I will "do you no harm, my good fellow," said Stanley: "am I indeed so very like Lord Coteridge?"—"You was not more like him when you was alive, "my Lord." The old Earl, who was not altogether prepared for the issue of the interview, was so much affected as to be obliged to retire, and Towers, seeing poor William trembling, stept forward to relieve him, lest the surprise should be attended with serious effects. "Your Lord calls you, William," said he. "Look you there," replied William, pointing to the imagined spirit of Lord Coteridge. "What! "at Mr. Stanley?" said Towers, going up and taking him by the hand. The huntsman rubbed his eyes. "Have I lost my senses?" said he, "is "not that ——." Edward now went in, when William was soon convinced that he had not seen a spirit; and he blessed himself to think of the wonderful likeness.

What a packet will my letter form, and yet I cannot conclude it, my dear Madam, without adding some other circumstances which I know will to you be interesting. We took tea with my Lord in the parlour where he had received us, but the gloom we brought back in our minds was not easily dispelled; the black chamber, the long dismal curtains, the affecting pictures, Lord Coteridge's sad story, and his father's remorse and penitence, hung heavily on the imagination; and we attempted in vain to recover the cheerfulness that had prevailed at dinner. We were still at the tea-table when we saw a carri-

age at a distance turn into the serpentine road that leads up to Powic-castle. "I have no visitors," said Lord Powic, "but on special invitations." "May it not," said Edward, "be Lord Chopstone? "he has kindly made us several visits lately."— "Kindly, do you say?" ejaculated the Earl.— "Attentions," said I, "are always kind, and he has "been uncommonly attentive at the Elms since his "return from Brighton." "Well! he must have "my title," replied he, "and my title requires my "fortune, therefore I shall not divide them: the "thought, however, is wormwood, and I consider it "as a part of my expiation. It is not he that is "coming: our connection is supported solely on "form, and he always either apprizes me of his visits, "or waits an invitation." His Lordship, however, was mistaken; in a few minutes Lord Chopstone was announced. It would but tire you, my dear Madam, were I to give a minute account of the syllogistical talk that followed his arrival. The meeting between the uncle and nephew was managed with decency: at the same time Lord Chopstone assured him, that his visit had been induced by his hearing that we were at Powic-castle: "For," said he, "I "intended to have spent an hour at the Elms on "being informed that the family remove to-morrow "to Woodville. My servant brought me word that "they were passing the day here, on which I di- "rected my postillion to drive to the castle." This catch-word, knuckle-down peer, as Towers calls him, caught but one argument while we staid, and in that he undertook to prove, that charity was the bane of happiness; and that, being an injury and an insult to the person on whom it was bestowed, it was unnatural to imagine it should produce a return of gratitude. His grand syllogism I remember was, that there was no happiness without independence;

charity destroys independence; *ergo*, charity is the bane of happiness. It was easy for him to follow up this sophistry, by inferring that it had no claim to gratitude. Edward, who is aware of his rude habit of affording no opening for a reply himself, while he constantly interrupts his adversary at every sentence, with bawling out, THAT I DENY, always makes conditions with him, that each should speak all he has to urge, and that no denial or contradiction should pass, till the person speaking has done; conditions, by the by, Chopstone always insists upon for himself, though he will not allow them if he can help it. I know nobody that manages him so well as Edward, not even Mr. Towers. I wish you could have heard my Edward's answer: it flowed with eloquence from reason. I will not pretend to give you his words: he examined the idea of independence, showed that in a general sense there was no such thing in nature, and that in the limited sense of wealth, or the power of supporting ourselves without the assistance of our fellow-creatures, it went no farther than being able to command that assistance, by stimulating their necessities into action from the hope of reward; for in fact there could be no comfort in existence without mutual aid. "The only "real independence," said he, "is that of virtue, "which no benevolence or charity can destroy. "Interested munificence on the one hand, and ser"vile compliance on the other, are as different from "beneficence and gratitude, as freedom is from re"straint, love from avarice, or in short virtue from "vice; and in my vocabulary, my Lord, the sy"nonimous terms of such charity and gratitude are "bribery and corruption. Gratitude is rooted in "nature, and follows on the reception of good. It "is neither in your power nor mine, by the dispersion "of gold, to raise in the bosoms of the needy that

" glowing, grateful sensation which has been raised " in my breast by Mr. Stanley. He has rendered " me an indelible service."—Stanley coloured, and Lord Chopstone stared at him—" but I do not feel " my happiness diminished," continued Edward, " by reflecting that I am obliged to him, though it " is impossible for me ever to make an adequate " return." Stanley and Caroline both looked to the ground. " The services rendered by money " may be returned without the oss of virtue: at all " events gratitude itself is a most pleasing return. " Grant therefore, that sometimes, on the one hand, " a degrading and vicious return is expected, which " is, on the other, compelled by urgent wants or " future hopes, it is tyranny, not charity, that is the " bane of happiness; and although I allow that the " industry of the needy is the proper and best means " for their support, it is clear to me that it is the " system of Providence here, that the rich should " increase the comforts of the poor, without injuring " their virtue." On saying this, Edward rose, for the carriages had been ordered, and we had heard them draw up. " Give me leave, Mr. Percival," cried Lord Chopstone. " Another time, if you " please, my Lord," replied Edward; " we are " going to Woodville, where, if your Lordship should " find yourself disposed to make an excursion so far, " we will have some arguments; at present time " calls upon us." Lord Chopstone then went up to Caroline, and said, that had he been fortunately passing at the time of her danger, instead of Mr. Stanley, he should have considered the event as the most gratifying obligation conferred on him by Fate, rather than as a service rendered to her. Stanley, who indeed often blushes in conversation without any apparent reason, coloured again, and something like a frown swelled over his brow. Caroline's

answer to Lord Chopstone was beautiful: "I pre-
"sume not, my Lord," said she, "to understand
"how favours can be conferred by Fate, which your
"Lordship knows to be immoveable; but I am fully
"sensible of the blessing that was conferred upon
"me by Providence, in guiding Mr. Stanley to the
"spot." Her brother's countenance spoke the pleasure she gave him; every eye expressed its admiration, and Stanley's features beamed delight. "Fate," said Lord Chopstone—"calls us away," added Edward, "but another time we'll take Fate "too into consideration." The old Earl smiled, and leading me to the carriage, hoped Fate would do him the favour of soon bringing us back to the Elms. "As for Stanley," said he, "I mean to "endeavour to make Powic-castle agreeable enough "to tempt him to be no stranger in it. You cannot "wonder at the interest he has inspired me with: "would to Heaven I could place him in that puppy's "shoes!" Caroline was handed by Chopstone, who, she told me, paid her some unusual compliments. From Edward I heard that Lord Powic gave Stanley a pressing general invitation, to which he only answered by colouring, and expressing a sense of the high honour conferred on him. We had taken some pains to discover this young man's secret, but we had no right to divulge it; which it was evident he did not mean to do himself. How ungrateful would it be in our family to obstruct any views he may have formed to advance himself on the scale of society! Of course you will believe that we have reported nothing on the subject; we have also engaged Mr. Stanhope to silence, and to throw no obstacle in the course he chooses to take. It is plain he does not wish to thrust himself into company; and, as Mr. Stanhope very well observed, if attentions should allure him to advance imprudently, his good sense and

sensibility will act upon him on the very first check he meets. Lord Powic, in whose mind nothing of this kind was passing, had asked Edward to set Stanley down at Cowper's farm, and when Chopstone was leading Caroline to the carriage in which I was, he took her from him, saying, "No, no, my Lord, divide "the ladies:" on which Mr. Stanhope and Edward came in with me, and Caroline was given to Mr. Towers and Stanley; and thus leaving the uncle and nephew together, we drove home. It was impossible not to ask Stanley to go with us to the Elms; but he excused himself, giving our journey the next morning as a reason, and Towers and Caroline set him down at Cowper's, which, though out of the road, was rather nearer than the Elms.

The next morning produced an incident which, considering all things, I could not but lament as unseasonable. Previous to our departure from the Elms, Stanley thought it necessary to send and enquire how we were after the day we had passed at Powic-castle, and chose for his messenger little Giles, who, for his part, chose to be accompanied, as before, by Triton. None of the gentlemen were in the house when the boy arrived. Caroline and I were sitting in the library, where they had left us, and we ordered Giles to be sent in. He came in smiling with his shaggy companion, who paid his attentions to us *like any living friend*, as Giles would have said. When we had asked how Stanley did, and returned our thanks, Giles was going; but stopping as he took hold of the handle of the lock: "Please you, Miss," said he to Caroline, "I hope "you be'ant angry wi' me."—"Angry with you, "Giles! for what?"—"Please you, Miss, it was no "fault of mine." Caroline blushed: she foresaw, as well as I, what was coming; for we had both foreborne through apprehension, and not from the

want of recollection, to question the boy upon what he was about to disclose unquestioned. "It was "all the fault of Triton, Miss; a' would na stop all "the way hoam: and the very first thing he did, "was to run and put his neck upo' Measter Stan- "ley's knee, all one as to say, I have brought you a "pretty ribbon from the prettiest young lady in all "the world. Measter Stanley answered to un', "and said, 'Oh, Triton, you be a happy dog: what "lady has made thee so fine?' Triton wagged his "tail, but the poor thing coud'na answer his "measter's question, seeing as how he had never "learned to speak with his tongue, only with his "ways; and so please you, Miss, he looked up full "in my face, as much as to say, 'God ha given "thee a tongue, Giles, and thee maun speak for "Triton:'—'so,' says I, 'Measter, it could be no- "body else but somebody at the Elms.' Then "he talked to the dog again. 'And so, Triton,' "says he, 'Mrs. Percival put it round your neck?' "'No, that she did not,' says I; but I did na tell "un who it was, for seeing you bid ma take it off, "I thought as how you choosed he should know "nothing about who tied it on. And he smiled, "and wished ma good night, and said, 'Never "mind the ribbon, Giles, it does not signify whose "it was.' And that was all that passed, an please "you: save just as I bid un a good night, and was "going away, he calls me, and says, 'Giles! was "there any company at the Elms?' and I says, there "was only the stranger gentleman from Lunnun.— "'But no ladies?' says he.—'No; no ladies,' says "I: and then he wished me a good night again, "and smiled as he always do when he speaks to a "body." Neither Caroline nor I ventured to ask what became of the ribbon, and we dismissed Giles with an assurance that it was a matter of no conse-

quence, and that we were not angry with him. Trifling as this incident is, my dear Madam, it added a thorn to that already in Caroline's heart. She discovered by it that she had made an impression on Stanley; and however her good sense, aided by pride, may smother the flame in her own bosom, pity and anxiety for that in his, are emotions which good sense, far from opposing, certainly prompt.

We set out from the Elms within an hour after Giles left us, dined at Abingdon, and arrived here about sun-set. Mr. Stanhope drove his gig: there were in the coach Edward, our darling little folks, Caroline, and myself; though Caroline and I sometimes took a seat by Mr. Stanhope, who makes himself more and more agreeable to Edward and the whole party. Towers, whom you may soon expect at Bevil-lodge, remains with Mr. Stockton a little longer at the Elms, that he may have opportunities of seeing more of Stanley. There seems to be some doubt still cleaving to his mind respecting that young man. Since our arrival here, I have had a very interesting conversation with Caroline about him. Early taught by my ever-dear parents the inestimable value of candour and sincerity, I determined on confiding to the dear girl the full extent of my thoughts and sentiments, and she returned my friendship with an ingenuousness worthy of my Edward's sister. Far from veiling her emotions, she confessed them to have taken stronger root in her mind than she had suspected, since her pride, a well-founded pride, had not at once eradicated them. "But be not uneasy, sister," said she, "I will con-
"quer. To my gratitude he has a right, and that
"he shall possess while I have breath; nor can I
"withhold my admiration from his merits: but to
"foster a passion, or admit a thought that tends to
"degrade the family to which I belong, is a folly,

" a crime, of which I will not be guilty. Whether " the degradation be a mere prejudice, or founded " in the nature of mankind, is of no importance to " me, while I know that the consequence of it would " corrode the hearts of those I most esteem and " love, and bring a blush to the face of every re- " lation or friend who should hear the mention of " my name."

Dear girl!—I give you her own words, my dear Madam, that they may increase your love and admiration of her. You need not be told that the tendency of my conversation was to strengthen her resolution, and elevate her virtue. I have no doubt, from the candour and spirit which animate Caroline, that a short time will free her heart from the entanglement of a tenderness into which it was very pardonably surprised, and leave the gratitude and admiration which are Stanley's due, unmixed with feelings destructive of her peace. Adieu, my beloved mother; from Woodville we shall bend our steps to Bevil-lodge. Meanwhile accept our blessings, and bestow yours on us.

THE END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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